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SHORTY JR. ON HIS EAR; OR, ALWAYS ON A RACKET.

A SEQUEL TO "SHORTY JR."

By the Author of "Shorty," "Shorty in Luck,"
"Shorty Jr.," &c., &c.

CHAPTER I.

SHORTY JUNIOR'S active spirit would not long permit him to remain idle, and at the end of a week's leisure he longed to be back in business, and at once set about organizing a show.

out through the country a sort of traveling museum; the show to include a fat woman, a living skeleton, a tattooed man, a few animals, a collection of wax figures, and whatever other curiosities, the more startling the better, he could manage to pick up.

And to conceive, with Shorty Junior, was to execute. He and his dad and Shanks were stopping at the St. Peter's Hotel, and had been since their arrival in town.

Shorty Junior bounded down the stairs one fine morning to tell his dad about the new lay out he had concluded to be boss of.

Shanks and his old man had been out the night before on a little private racket of their own, and meeting a party of friends, came home carrying a bigger cargo of loosely stowed beer aboard than was good for them.

Just as Shorty Junior was about to open his old

him, "who's der early birds dat wants ter ketch er beverage so soon?"

"Ther two circus gentlem'n," replied the waiter.

"Oh, der ol' man an' Shanks," answered Shorty with a comical grin. "Well, dey isn't half dressed yet, an' if yer doesn't mind, I'll take der fluids in ter 'em myself."

"All right," said the waiter, handing over the tray; "thank yer, sir."

After he had gone Shorty Junior took one of the glasses, and nodding towards the door, said, "How! Here's all der hair off yer back head, ol' man, an' may yer shadder never shrink."

He drank one of the corksers himself, and, tossing the other out of the window, placed the tray and glasses on the floor, and boldly entered his dad's room.

"Mornin'," he observed. "I hear you an' Shanks



Shorty Jr. got on his ear, as every individual mother came down and growled at him.

This time he resolved to start out on a brand new racket. He made up his mind, after some reflection, to take

man's door, a red-headed waiter came bowling along carrying two cocktails on a tray.

"Hello, head-wital slinger," said the kid, stopping

was on a bust las' night, an' now yer botn occupier der same bed."

"Stow yer chin!" commanded his dad, who was just

getting into his clothes, and looked as if he had been waltzing with a hurricane all night and got the worst of it. "Don't speak ter me 'tall."

"How did yer enjoy der temprance lectur' las' night, Shanks?" asked Shorty Junior of that unhappy party who lay groaning on the bed with a head on him as big as an ash barrel. "Why, 'f I could collect all der snakes you fellers are beholdin' now free of cost, an' front seats to boot, I'd start a menagerie."

"Yer darn little imp," yelled Shanks, "git out of here, or I'll chuck a boot-jack at your head!"

"Oh, I see, yer both got der jams. Lay down an' die while I goes out fer de undertaker ter come measure fer yer Greenwood boxes."

Snakes and coffins were too much for men in the condition of Shanks and the old man, and they both fired at Shorty Junior at once, the one a wash bowl and the other a coal scuttle; but the kid dodged out of the door, and the two missiles brought up against a large looking-glass, smashing it into pieces.

Shorty Junior poked his head in the door again and laughing all over, said:

"Bust er fifteen hundred dollar pier glass, hey? Well, dat's wuss dan yer bust last night; den you took a glass of peer—"

"Go away!" bawled Shanks. "Where's them two cocktails I ordered?"

"Dat's right," continued the kid, still giving them shaft, and at the same time keeping a sharp eye for stray boot-jacks floating through the air. "Stick ter cocktails, and dey'll make boss men of yer. Why, I knew a chap once dat lived on cocktails, an' every mornin' he used ter have a goriller, ten feet high, a settin' on der foot-board of his bed, a playin' on a tin bugle; an' perched up on his pillar dere'd be two little monks erfannin' him wid der bureau. Stick der—"

The kid closed the door just in time to escape a chair, and he heard his dad, "darn dat boy," and jerk the bell for those cocktails.

Shorty Junior, soon appeased his dad, and as the three inseparables sat at breakfast he explained to them the nature of the new show he had concluded to start. His dad and Shanks were very much pleased with the idea and predicted for it a big success.

"Get a tearing old fat woman," suggested Shanks, making a dive for some fish.

"An' er giantess, nine foot high," added Shorty.

"Oh, yer got yer wicked ole eye on der females, has yer?" asked Shorty Junior. "Well, yer let my fat woman alone, will yer?"

"S'pose der public let's her alone?" said his dad.

"Let me alone for dat," replied the kid.

"Get lots of curiosities," mumbled Shanks, his mouth full of fish.

"Watter I want wid curiosities?" inquired Chips, sarcastically. "Ain't I got you an' dad? An' ain't der two of yer curiosities 'nuff fer one show? Why, yer'll draw—yer sal'ry; an' der public'll come an' see yu, too—in jail, an' glad der chance."

They would both have gone for the kid for this if it had not been that at that moment, Shanks, bolting his hash, had collared a big fish bone that fell in love with his throat, and concluded to stick there. He spluttered and coughed and got as red in the face as a beet.

"That's right," observed Shorty Junior, coolly helping himself to more hot biscuit; "spit her right out 'f yer don't like it."

"Ber—ber—bone, throat," spluttered Shanks. "Oh, oh, choke; ber—bone!"

"Go on an' ch—ch—choke away," said Shorty Junior. "Might's well ch—ch—choke now wid er fish bone as bym by wid a rope."

All Shanks could do was to shake his fist at his tormentor, while Shorty yelled to the kid: "We'll fluke! he'll die! Hit him on de back!"

Shorty Junior jumped up and began to slap Shanks between the shoulders, softly at first, but getting a good shot at him he lent him a sockdolager that sent him up against the table with such force as to upset it and dump all it contained into the bosom of a fat man on the opposite side.

"Gorernity!" yelled the man, struggling to free himself from chops, dishes, and hot gravy. "Lemme up! I'm stabbed! Police! police!"

To stop his noise, Shorty piled the big table on top of him, while the kid yelled for the waiter and ordered a doctor immediately, as he declared the man had a fit.

"A fit is it?" asked the waiter, stupidly.

"Yes," said Shorty Junior. "Tain't no fit ter have. I reckon his clothes is ter tight fer him: dey fit him ter much. Gimme dat water."

He took the pitcher the waiter was holding from his hands, and as the fat man had by this time got his head clear of the table, and was just about to yell, he dashed its contents into his face.

A physician, who lodged in the hotel, was quickly summoned, and in spite of the fat man's entreaties and protests, he was held firmly down by half a dozen men while he was bled, and had salt rubbed into the palms of his hand till there wasn't a whole inch of skin left on them.

"Yer better glide, kid," said Shorty, "or yer'll bust yer name in der Police News ter-morrow mornin' s'big as life."

They glode silently away, and went out for a stroll.

That afternoon Shorty was going to take Buster up the road to give the bigbugs a lively shake. He knew he could beat the best of them, and he wanted to make the owners of some of the ten thousand dollar stock look sick. He ordered Buster to be hitched up at three o'clock.

"Kin he trot?" asked the livery man.

"Trot!" replied Shorty Junior. "Well, 'f he can't git up an' dust anything that scoots up Harlem Lane, I'll kill him, an' yer'll eat him in sassege all nex' week."

The two met at dinner.

"How's yer trout?" asked the kid of Shanks. "Tain't bones in yours now?"

"Throat's gorgeous," said Shanks who had fully recovered. "You lent me a mighty rap, blame you, but the bone flew somewhere I don't know where."

"Don't yer git set in der habit er swollin' bones, 'cause 'f yer do yer'll have ter always carry 'round bone-set tea wid yer," observed Chips with a chuckle.

"What, yer chucklin' over such an old almanac joke as dat? Go and the coroner an' tell him yer want ter die," exclaimed his dad.

"Well," Shorty Junior gave it back to him, "can't er feller chuckle when he's in der company of er couple er first-class chuckle-heads?"

"You will get chucked out of here fust thing you are aware of, sonny," growled Shanks.

"Oh pitch inter yer chuck an' dry up," said the kid. "One swoller don't make er Spring, but when yer swolled dat bone an' I hit yer fer yer mudder, yer made a spring dat'll tak der fat man all winter ter git over."

After the dinner, which passed off quietly, the kid reduced several cigarettes to ashes, and then announced his intention of taking a short walk.

After he had gone, Shanks turned to Shorty and said:

"Know where he's bound?"

"No," answered Shorty. "Where?"

"He's going to drive Buster up the road. Now that lad is getting too fresh; got too many rackets on hand altogether, and it's time we pulled him up like a skittish colt."

"What yer drivin' at now?" asked Shorty. "Der kid is er skittish colt an' wants breakin' bad."

"Yes, over the back with a tarnation big club," said Shanks. "We'll pass him out some of his own fodder to chew."

"No, don't let him chew his own farder," broke in Shorty with a laugh. "I doesn't choose ter be chewed."

"We'll give him a racket that will sicken him," continued Shanks, not heeding the old man's jokes.

"He's ordered Buster harnessed this afternoon at three; now we'll go down and have the horse out at half past two, and leave him behind sucking his thumb like a two-year old baby."

"Agreed," cried Shorty, delighted. "We'll fool him out of dat ride bad."

When Shorty Junior went for Buster at the time appointed, the livery man looked at him in blank surprise.

"Wny he's gone," he said. "Your father an' a long legged chap come here and said yer wasn't going out to day, an' they've taken the hoss themselves. Been gone half an hour."

"Well," mused Shorty Junior, scratching his head reflectively, "dey got der gran' bounce on me dis time sure pop; and I wasn't lookin' fer it nudder. I'll mak' dem a present of a layout dat'll sicken dem 'fore night."

He hired a saddle horse and started in pursuit, and after a hard ride found his dad and Shanks enjoying themselves in a hotel just this side of Jerome Park.

"Yer a couple of putty ol' earthquakes now, ain't yer?" was his opening salute. "Didn't yer know I had a 'gement ter beat Bill Vanderbilt up der road dis afternoon? Had money bet dat I'd knock der shoes right off his team, Steel Eyes an' Small Hosses. Now yer busted up der racket."

After a little chin Shorty Junior pretended to forgive them, but at the same time cautioned them.

"Look out fer dis pimple in der future," he said, 'cause I'se liable ter hop up on yer an' git square, yer pawn yer hat an' bet I will every time."

Shanks left the room after a while for something, and Shorty Junior slid right up to his dad and said:

"Look here, I kno' Shanks put dis job up on me; stan' in wid a feller an' gimme a show ter git hunk."

"All right," replied his dad. "What's yer racket?"

"Why, ter leave Shanks up here an' let him hoof it home," said Shorty Junior.

"I'm in wid yer," laughed his dad, "chalk out yer plan."

"Yer slip out an' drive off quietly by yerself an' say nothin' ter nobody. I got a hoss here an' I'll come after yer an' leave me jolly joker behind ter himself. Der yer see?"

"Count yer dad in fer dat racket every time," grinned Shorty. "I'll dust out now."

He left; but he hadn't been gone two minutes before Shorty Junior took a grand tumble to himself.

"By der holy 'jimpin' poker," he thought to himself, "der old man snapped at that too bilin' quick ter mean good. Bet he'll go plumb back on me an' give me away, an' den it'll be me dat's left. Nixy if I know myself."

He got up and followed his dad, and slipped under the horse shed just in time to hear him explaining the joke to Shanks.

"I tort so," said the kid.

"Darn him for a Timbuctoo baboon," he overheard Shanks say. "Wants to leave me behind, hey? I'll show him a play worth two of it. Here, you Shorty, you got in the wagon yourself and I'll ride his horse, then I guess we'll see who's left behind."

"O. K.," replied Shorty, and he backed Buster out and prepared to travel.

"Well, if dey wouldn't leave a innocent young lad like me up here in der country ter foot it down ter New York, I'm blowed," mused the kid. "It's heartless; but I'll bust up der show, or I ain't no Yankee."

He decided what to do at once.

As it was a cold day Shanks had on his ulster overcoat, and the belt securely buckled around him.

In passing from the shed, horsemen were obliged to drive by a tall barn from an upper window, of which hung a block and tackle used for hoisting in hay.

Shorty slipped unobserved up to this barn, and accosting a tall stableman, said:

"Say, me chicken, do yer see dat long-legged pud-

din' head mountin' dat hoss under der shed?"

"I'm er lookin' 'tigh at him," answered the man.

"You detain that man when he floats past here, an' stick der hook on der end of dat tackle under the belt of his ulster, an' I'll heave yer out a silver dollar."

"I'm er pickin' dat silver right up," observed the man with a grin.

"All right," said Shorty Junior, and he returned to the front stoop of the hotel.

In a minute after along drove his dad.

"Heave to!" yelled the kid. "I'm ridin' in wagons ter day; let me aboard."

"Ta, ta," nodded Shorty. "Good-by; hope yer'll find der walkin' pleasant. I'll see yer later."

And touching Buster with the whip, he went off flying.

The stableman had just got the hook securely fastened in Shanks' belt, all unknown to that individual, when Shorty Junior rushed down towards him, shouting:

"Here, what yer givin' me? Fall off dat hoss?"

"Ta, ta," cried Shanks in imitation of Shorty, "Good-bye; we'll meet anon."

He grinned all over as he waved his hand in token of farewell and touched up the animal he bestrode with his heels. The horse gave a sudden plunge forward and left Shanks at the end of the rope wildly dangling in the air.

By direction of the kid, three or four men began to hoist away, and before Shanks could even utter a yell he was swinging clear of everything, and twenty feet from the ground.

"Lemme down!" he shouted. "Hellenblazes, I'll kill somebody for this! Where's th' police?"

Shorty Junior was splitting his sides at the ridiculous figure Shanks was cutting in his vain efforts to free himself.

A crowd gathered at once to see the fun, and began to cod the kid's friend unmercifully.

"What kind of a bird is that?"

"Tain't er bird, it's a balloon!"

"No, it's a comet!"

"Git a gun an' shoot it!"

"Hello!" bawled Shorty Junior, "what makes yer roost so high? Is yer der second Mahomet, number two, 'spended 'tween heaven and ear? Goin' ter giv' me der gran' racket, was yer, an' let me walk back? Well, I'll do better. I'll let yer fly back."

"Gorernity!" yelled Shanks. "I'll be the death of you when I get down!"

Shorty mounted his horse, which had been caught, and returned by a bystander, and looking up at the swinging and struggling Shanks, he said:

"Hey, up dere, I'll come over nex' summer an' git yer skeleton." And then in imitation of both his dad and his victim, he continued:

"Ta, ta; good-bye, hope yer'll enjoy yerself; I'll see yer later."

He spoke to the horse and away he went for home, paying no attention to Shanks' cries and entreaties, but leaving him to get down the best way he could.

"Passin' out rackets on a plate to me, hey," muttered he. "I'll show 'em; an' now for the ol' man."

He drove home at a furious rate and got home fifteen minutes before his dad.

When Shorty entered the hotel there sat the kid calmly smoking a cigarette. He was thunderstruck.

"Where's Shanks?" he asked.

"How do I know?" growled the kid. "Nice taffy yer two mutton heads is givin' me. You takes th' wagon an' he takes the hoss. How do I know where he is?"

"How did yer git down?" grinned his dad.

"Flew down."

"Oh I didn't know yer had any influence dat way."

"An' when I flew I didn't have ter git as full of fluid as yer did las' nite neider."

Having had their little say they were soon on good terms and fell to talking over the prospects of the new show.

Seven o'clock, eight o'clock, nine o'clock came along, but no Shanks.

Shorty was getting nervous and fidgetty.

"Where der deuce der yer 'spect dat feller is anyhow?" he asked.

"Dunno!" exclaimed the kid; "broke his neck I 'spose."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Shorty.

"Would go an' ride astrange hoss; regular kicker too," said Shorty Junior.

"Cheese it!" growled his dad.

"Might a-been robbed an' murdered," continued the kid trying to worry the old man.

There was an interval of silence.

Then Shorty Junior got up and said: "Dad, I'll go down stairs an' see if der long-legged oyster is been seen 'roun dere yet."

He left the room, not to inquire for Shanks, but to work a racket on his dad for driving out his horse.

It had come to him in that brief interval of silence.

He got a blank telegraph form and filled it out. Then he hired a boy in a blue suit to deliver it to his dad in five minutes after.

This part of his plan fixed, he went out and hired the worst looking old coach he could find, and had a long talk to the driver.

When he got back to his dad, he sank down on a chair, and said with a sigh:

"Shouldn't wonder 'f he was dead. Can't hear a word of him."

Before his dad could reply, the boy in blue dashed into the room, all out of breath, and handed him a message.

"What th' d—I is dis?" he cried.

"Bust her open, an' chew der contents, an' ye'll find out," advised the kid.

Shorty two off the envelope, and read aloud as follows:

"SHORTY: Thrown from my horse, and very badly hurt. Come to me at once. I am at 919 West Ninety-third Street."

SHANKS."

"Der d—l!" cried Shorty. "Tort it was sometin' like dat. Bet he's bust his neck in two. Kid, tumble down an' git a coach, mus' dig up dere rite 'way. Com' get long."

"I'll negoshate fer der barouch, but nixey go for me," said the kid, dancing off.

Shorty came down right after him, hopped into the coach and was off for 93d Street in no time.

But not before Chips had, unseen by him, mounted the box beside the driver. By this time it was raining in torrents, but Shorty Junior wrapped himself well up, and for the sake of his racket defied wind and weather.

"Where'll I drive him to?" asked the coachman as they dashed off.

"Anywhere," replied the kid. "Git in dark streets dat's full of holes, an' go lik' blazes. Giv' der ol' man a lively shakin' up."

The coach banged and rattled along at a furious rate, and Shorty was bumped first against one side and then the other.

"Unfeelin' brute dat kid," he muttered; "Spect 'f I was reachin' out fer me las' breath merself he'd shake me. Dis is tuf on Shanks."

"Hang der expense," cried Shorty Junior to the driver; "keep yer eye peeled fer a big hole, an' dump der ol' boy in."

They got in a street where they were digging a sewer, and all of a sudden the coach gave a lurch, the door flew open, and Shorty, with the breath most knocked out of his body by the hard driving, popped out head first plumb into the yawning hole.

"Hooray! bully!" yelled the kid, as the old coach righted and rattled along, "Stop der caboose an' let me off."

The hole into which Shorty had been dumped was about eight feet deep and the bottom one muck of mud and water. There was no getting out without help, for which he was roaring lustily when the kid got back to him. Spite of the rain a crowd collected a once and began yelling:

"Man overboard," bawled one.

"Get er derrick."

"Chuck 'im er life preserver."

"Call out der melishy."

Everybody got there but the police. One fat man came rushing up all out of breath.

"What's row?" he spluttered out.

"Man fell in der sewer."

"Pshaw! run three blocks through the rain for nothin'. Thought it was a fight."

"What's he doin' down the sewer, anyhow?" asked one.

"Tryin' ter commit sewercide!" yelled Shorty Junior, who was dancing around the crowd, his face on the broad grin.

"Never mind yer derrick an' yer ropes," shouted his dad from the hole, "jist chuck me down dat long-legged, slab-sided, lantern-jawed, squint-eyed galoot of a coachman dat dumped me here till I chaw him all up. Some Christain gentleman heave him to me."

The kid noticed that the majority of the crowd were young fellows, and it only took him half a minute to find out that they were medical students. He took some of them aside and whispered to them.

"Agreed," they shouted, laughingly; and while two quickly brought a shutter, the rest yanked Shorty out of the hole.

He was covered from head to foot with yellow mud, and looked like a drowned rat, only more so.

The moment he appeared above the brink he was seized by strong hands, and spite of his struggles, placed on the shutter and held there till he was carried to a house near by. Once within doors he was strapped to the shutter and laid on a table.

"What yer doin'?" he yelled, trying to get loose.

"Keep perfectly quiet, sir, till Dr. Pillpuddle arrives," said a student to him gravely. "It is a very sad case. Neck broken in three places, legs fractured, seven ribs smashed and your head cracked."

"I'd crack your head if I could git up," groaned Shorty.

"Ah, here comes the doctor himself," observed the student, as Shorty Junior, dressed in a flowing gown and wearing a little skull cap with a long tassel, entered the room.

"Why, it's der kid!" said his dad.

"Kid," said a student, solemnly. "You are wandering in your mind. Kid? ah, a goat. There are no goats here."

"Chips, go fer 'em, an' let yer dad up," pleaded his victim.

"Yer mistaken," replied Shorty Junior, pompously. "A little sighty. Never saw yer before in me life. Ah, let me see," and he began to examine his patient, "concussion of der semi-divergeracal, astrominical duf-lux of der explosive membrane and congruity of der graminivorous liturgical. He must be bled and blistered and have both legs sawed off at once."

"With a sword?" gravely asked the student.

"No, wid a hand-saw," answered the kid.

"I tinks I mus' be gone in der head," muttered Shorty. "Taint' Chips. He couldn't sling such language as dat to save his heathen soul."

And then he turned pale and gave himself up for lost, for they brought out a lot of instruments, surgical and otherwise, including saws, knives, chisels and mallets, and spread them out before him.

"Mr. Thompson," said the kid, keeping where his father could hear, but not see him, "send for Scullider, the undertaker, and tell him we've got a gent 'ere as wants ter git measured for a Greenwood overcoat, an' also notify der coroner to sit on der body."

"If I was only loose, I'd make a job fer der coroner dat ed las' him his life," moaned Shorty, making a grand effort to free himself.

How far this joke would have been carried it is impossible to say, for just here Shorty Junior noticed that his dad was rapidly getting loose, and knowing that he

would make things hot and lively, he slipped off his borrowed garments, and made tracks for the hotel, where he changed his wet clothes for dry ones, and sat down to await developments.

As the kid had expected, his dad did release himself, and he went for those students bald-headed. Seeing a chance finally to escape, he put for home as fast as his short legs would carry him.

Shorty Junior still sat before the fire, apparently just as his dad had left him.

"Been out?" asked Shorty, eyeing him suspiciously.

"No, find Shanks?"

"No."

As they were talking who should enter but Shanks himself, tired, wet to the skin, and nearly as muddy as Shorty.

"You darned infernal little runt," he exclaimed, going for the kid who dodged out of the way, "I'll be the death of you first thing in the morning!"

"How did yer git down?" grinned the imp, "fly down on der wings of love? Yer look's 'f yer fell down."

"Hadt'a red with me and had to walk all the way," growled Shanks, at which the kid shouted with glee.

"Didn't fall off yer horse in Harlem?" asked Shorty in surprise.

"Hadt'n no horse to fall off of."

Shorty tumbled, and made a sudden dive for his hopeful son, and if he had got his hands on our little hero, it would have gone hard with him; but he ran out of the room and made his escape.

As he tumbled into bed he mumbled, "dey don't put up no shenana in games on this plum cake les he gits hunk, yer kin bet."

Bright and early next morning he came hopping down stairs.

"I got 'em!" said he, when he found his dad and Shanks.

"What, der jams?" asked Shorty.

"No, an idea."

"Hold on to it tight," exclaimed Shanks. "What is it like?"

"We'll start a baby show," cried the kid.

The scheme took immensely, and they all went right to work at it with a will.

They hired a hall, filled the town with flaming posters, and on the second day, babies began to arrive by dozens.

Short babies and long babies, crying and silent ones, fighting babies, babies born with teeth, a black baby with white hair, cross-eyed and cross-grained babies, little and big, fat and thin, twins, triplets, and one flush or four of a kind.

Shorty Junior never had such fun in his life before.

He sat at a little desk and received all applicants himself, while his dad and Shanks assigned them to places inside.

The crying babies had a corner to themselves, the angelic young ones had a separate place, the sweet smiling cherubs occupied another spot, and the fighting kids were confined separated in cages.

It was great sport.

For one day. And then Shorty Junior got on his ear.

He never had so many rows in so short a time before in his life.

Every individual mother came down and growled at him. Her baby had been hid from the gaze of the public; another's young un was not a fighter "by no means, so he wasn't," and thus it went on from morning till night.

Every time he appeared in the show room, each baby there set up a hideous howling that almost drove him crazy; and he wished the brats all the way to Jericho and back. The only thing that appeased him was the receipts at the box office, and these were red hot.

"Be you the head baby shower?" asked a big, raw-boned dame, carrying a squalling young giant in her arms.

"Dat's der party I repersent," said Shorty Junior, looking up. "What kin I do fer yer?"

"I want ter 'zibit this charmin' young un inside here, an' ef I don't git the fust premium there'll be more war 'round this camp than you ever dreamed of, young man."

"All right," replied the kid; "he looks as if he'd take der fust prize, if he cud reach it."

The name, age, description, etc., were duly entered in a book and the female passed inside.

In just two minutes she came back.

"Who's that ere big-eared, long-legged, pig-nosed, carrot of a Yankee you got in there?" she fiercely demanded.

"Why, dat's Shanks der head nus," explained Shorty Junior. "Why, dat man cud live on babies, he loves 'em ter dat extent. He was born a baby himself an' never got cured of it."

"Well, he's gone an' slammed me darlin critter of er baby in er iron cage," she went on wildly.

"Says, as how he's er fitin' baby when he's that peaceful he won't eat meat. I wants him sot right in the front row, or I'll bust yer ol' show up higher'n er kite!"

"I'll fix it at once," said the kid. "Come with me."

When they got in the exhibition-room they found her "darlin' critter" having a rattling boxing match with two other babies; and he got them down and was beating them black and blue.

Shorty Junior snatched the darling from the floor, and would have cheerfully fired it out of the window, if he had dared.

"He's er cheerful child, he is," said his proud mother, "likes to play with other young uns an' boss 'em round; but he's clear grit, an' I'll back him ter wallop any other darn chick yer got in the shop fer fifty dollars."

"Set any place yer like wid dat young Tom Hyer," the kid said to her. "But a word in yer private ear."

Dat long legged galoot ov r dere, says ye ain't der mudder of der child, an' dat it ain't got no particular farder ter brag 'bout neider."

"What! Did he say that?"

She fired that young one on the floor, and marching over to Shanks, grabbed him by the collar, and began to punch his head.

"No father, bey? Ain't his mam, ain't I?"

Spang!

Shanks tried to escape, but she held him fast and hammered him till a policeman interfered and separated them. Then she picked up her squalling young one, and with a toss of her head and a sniff, walked off in triumph to the other end of the room.

"Dat's der only fun I've had ter-day," soliloquised Chips as he went back to his desk. "Jist wait till I bust up dis show an' I'll give 'em a racket as 'll astonish 'em. I ain't goin' ter be mad an' on me ear a week fer nothin', by no means. I'll be revenged, yer bet."

The big female came right out after him.

"See here, you little cuss," she yelled, "where's that fust premium? I ain't goin' ter stan' none of this darn nonsense; fork out the prize."

"Der prizes is goin' ter be give out ter-morrow," he explained; "an' I've got yer down for der very fust an' biggest."

This mollified her and she went back.

And returned almost immediately.

"What kind of a bean pole do yer take me fer?" she howled, as mad as seven furies.

"What's der matter now?" asked the kid, getting wild.

"There's er clam-mouth, wooden-legged ol' hen in there, an' she's got a sick lop-eared baby with only one tooth, an' he's makin' faces right along at my precious, an' I won't stand it."

Shorty Junior pacified her finally, and after she had gone back, he said to himself, mad as a hornet:

"I'm berdem, 'f I'll stan' dis any longer. I'll play a racket on dat ol' daisy an' shut her up."

He sent out and got a bladder, and blowing it up, put it beneath the clothes of a big doll baby he had. He carried this dummy inside, and watching his opportunity when the fighting female was away from her child, quarreling with a neighbor, he made an exchange. He laid the dummy in the crib and carted her young one off and hid it away. The head was crammed with paper.

"Now, me sunflower," he said, "I'll don't set yer crazy, me name ain't Shorty Junior."

Presently, just as the fighting woman was returning, a fat man halted, and with his back to the kid's sham baby, stood looking about.

The woman had got where she could see what she supposed to be her child, when Shorty Junior suddenly tripped and tumbling forward, butted the fat man square in the stomach, and knocked him plumb over into the crib.

Three hundred pounds went crashing down on the kid's dummy and the bladder within exploded with a noise like a cannon.

Everybody saw the accident, and mothers screamed, and men yelled.

"Murder! Murder! You've smashed my child!" howled the now frantic female.

She grabbed the fat man who was half frightened to death, and dragging him out of the crib, picked up her supposed child.

One look was enough. Everybody saw it was a doll, and a roar of laughter went up that shook the building.

CHAPTER II

For one moment the fighting woman stood as if petrified.

Then, with a roar like a locomotive struggling with a horrid hoarseness, she yelled:

"Whar is me che-ild!"

She was wild; and seizing the busted doll baby by the heels, she charged at the shouting crowd, knocking them right and left.

Mothers screamed, babies cried, and the audience, some laughing and some bellowing, got out, or were knocked out of her path, amid cries of:

"Bounce her!"

"Turn out the guard!"

"Read the riot act!"

"Oh!" "Gimmededies!" "Take care!" "Who th' deuce yer runnin' agin'?"

"Give th' ol' tuff another show!"

Finally she found her young one, and proudly returned, while the multitude, who were now mostly perched on window sills, or had climbed up to the tops of posts, or resorted to other places of safety, cheered her lustily.

The show continued to draw immensely, and the kid was raking in bushels of stamps.

And this was all that tended to keep him in good humor, for the eternal squalling of the babies, and rampant quarrelling of the lookers-on as to which was the handsomest kid of the lot, the incessant growling of the mothers, and the thousand and one annoyances of such an exhibition kept him in continual hot water, or, in fact, on his ear.

He noticed that Shanks was growing very sweet on some of the good-looking young matrons, and he made up his mind to give that long-legged Yankee a racket.

"I'll histe him high, or I'll bust."

He wrote, or had written for him, half a dozen sweet scented little notes, all in different hands, the most of them reading something like this:

"MY OWN DEAR SHANKS: 'I cannot gaze upon you, as you fit all the long day in and out like a sunbeam bright, without feeling that my poor heart has become, almost unknown to myself, wholly, wholly thine. I love you! Oh! how much better than life itself! Could you, can you return my love? If yes, address one whose soul yearns for sympathy." "D. X. Station R."

These notes were sent to the hotel, and Chips received all the answers at the post-office.

Shanks bloomed right into a ladies' man, and some of his replies were stunning.

He took to tipping his hat on one side of his head in a rakish way, and began to sport fancy bouquets in his button hole.

Shorty Junior kept his own counsel, and when he thought the thing was ripe, he put his plan in operation.

He went around to a beer saloon, and for the beer and a stamp, hired six men to do exactly what he wanted them—to be injured husbands and desperate villains. He also posted two or three of the waiters in the hotel, and as he was always very regular in his "tips," they readily consented to give him a hand.

Shanks, who had grown mysterious and uncommunicative since his intrigues, came away from the show one night, wondering in his mind which of the fair creatures were addressing him.

On his way to the hotel he met several excited men, who acted queerly. One rushed up close to him, looked him savagely in the face, and strode on. Another, as he passed him, hissed: "Ah! 'tis he!" and hurried away.

He met so many of these men, all wild, fierce-looking fellows, and they so evidently intended their stares and remarks for him that he began to be alarmed.

When he entered his hotel a waiter handed him three letters, and he found three more tucked under the door of his room. They all amounted to much the same thing, reading about thus:

"VILLAIN!—Beware! I am on your track!

"A HUSBAND."

"PERFIDIOUS WRETCH!—You have dared to address my wife—my wife, sir! I will have your heart's blood! Remember me!"

"JONES."

"A guilty conscience needs no accuser," and Shanks, though no coward, saw that he had got himself into a heap of trouble, and began to shake in his boots.

Shorty Junior had followed him all the way home, but now kept perfectly quiet in his own room.

After supper, during which the kid had noticed that Shanks was nervous and ate little, the Yankee gusher arose and started to go out.

Right at the door of the hotel stood six men.

"'Tis he!"

"He comes!"

"Re-venge!"

And they made a grand rush at him. He bolted inside like a race-horse, and went up to his room.

The kid followed him, and opening the door, said:

"Why, Shanksy, ol' man, what's der trouble wid yer? Yer look white's a sheet."

And then Shanks explained the whole business.

"Serves yer right," says Shorty Junior, when he had finished. "Orten ter trouble der ladies."

"Yes," exclaimed Shanks, "but the infuriated husbands outside, you know. What in gosh'mighty am I goin' to do? They'll murder me."

"Come wid me," answered the kid. "Dat is a bad racket, but Shorty Junior is goin' ter stick rite wid yer all der time. If dey kills you dey got ter me too."

"Thank you, kid," groaned Shanks, shaking his hand.

"We'll fool 'em yet," he cried excitedly, hauling out an old red chest from a closet: "I got it all fixed; yer git in here an' I'll have yer carried out an' took away by express."

This chest had been used in the circus days, and had holes bored through the top and both ends, so that a man could remain in it for some time quite comfortably. Shanks once inside and the lid down, the kid carried in a couple of waiters and had it carried down and placed in an express wagon in waiting.

Shanks had grabbed a huge water pitcher before getting in the box, and he held on to it like grim death, resolving if he was attacked to defend himself to the last.

"What's der little trouble?" asked Shorty, coming up at this moment.

"Sh! Racket!" whispered the kid with a grin.

"Got Shanks in der box. Wanter come an' see de fun?"

"I'm wid yer," said his dad, his mouth expanding from ear to ear. "I owe him one for saddlin' all der cryin' babies on my side der show."

They jumped into the wagon.

"Keep quiet, Shanks," whispered Chips through one of the holes, "der willans is all 'roun' us, but day doesn't 'spect nothin'."

In a moment more they were off, and turning the corner struck into a good gait, the six desperate villains following close behind.

"Are we safe?" asked Shanks, suddenly popping his head out of the chest.

At this very moment arose a wild and savage yell.

"There he goes!"

"Hurra! Come on, we've got him!"

Shanks disappeared in his box immediately.

The streets were dark, the pavements rough, and as the wagon had no springs, the wretched victim was slammed from side to side, and his breath almost knocked out of him.

The yells of the infuriated pursuers could be plainly heard. All at once Shanks poked his head and arms out of the box, and wildly waving the big pitcher, which he still retained, he hoarsely shouted:

"Gorlmit! Helenblazes! Drive fast! Why the d—l don't you fly, for God's sake?"

And then he again disappeared.

Finally they halted.

"Shanksy," whispered Shorty Junior, "don't open der lid; don't stir; don't breathe. I tinks we've shook 'em. We're at der rear entrance of a hotel where I knows der people; an' yer keeps quiet an' I'll have yer carried rite inter a room."

"All right," softly answered Shanks, more dead than alive.

The chest was lifted out and carried up, up, up, the

man inside, sometimes standing on his head and sometimes on his feet. At length it was set down.

"Keep still now," again whispered the kid, "will I go out and see if it's all right."

And he and the carriers walked silently away.

Shanks remained perfectly quiet for about five minutes, and then, as nobody came and all was still, he gently raised the lid a little way, then more yet, and then wide open.

And quietly found himself sitting up in that chest, perched on top of an enormously high pile of lumber, overlooking the river.

"Well, I swan!" was all he could say.

A moment after he was climbing down off that lumber and with many curses, muttering to himself.

"A racket of that confounded, goldarn, goshfired kid, I'll bet eighteen dollars."

Shorty Junior and his dad, both roaring with laughter, dismissed the six desperate villains with a round of beer, and took a coach and went home and to bed.

They met next morning at breakfast.

Shorty Junior was in a hilarious mood, his dad was cheerful and Shanks grumpy and grumpy, looked as if he had been wrestling all night with the ghost of his great great grandmother, and got decidedly the worst of it.

"Helle, Shanks," saluted the kid, with a malicious grin, "ser-lumber well las' nite?"

"I'll lumber you," growled Shanks. "I'll knock splinters out of you and cut you up in shavings, confound you."

"Heard yer was indulgin' in a bozin' match las' evenin'," grinned the kid. And then he began to whistle "We parted by the river, you and I."

"Do yer suppose," asked Shanks, getting madder and madder, "that I'm going to be bounced around, shut up in boxes, and piled up 'long with other old lumber for you're tarnation amusement? Who put that racket up on me last night?"

Here the kid made a mistake. Thinking his dad wasn't observing him, he slyly pointed in his direction and then turned away.

"What!" said Shanks, quite taken aback.

The old man saw the motion in the looking glass, and wheeling suddenly around, he raised Chips with his leather.

That small lump of a joker went up in the air about three feet and came down facing the door.

"Moly hoses!" he ejaculated.

And then without stirring he asked:

"Am I all here?"

Shanks roared over the kid's discomfiture, and Shorty, grinning in spite of himself at the comical attitude the boy had struck, exclaimed:

"Dat's what yer git 's a reward fer tryin' ter shoulder off yer rackets on der ol' man."

"Look here, Shanks," said the kid. "I'll put yer in der hole right 'way, 'cause I got all dem gushin' letters what yer rit, an' I'm goin' ter publish 'em."

Shanks ceased to laugh and turned pale as a sheet.

"An' no gemmen," continued Chips, "goes a knock-in' der dust out, an' a explorin' under my coat tails widout he breeds heaps of trouble fer himself. I'll git square on yer, dad, fer dat."

He walked out, closely followed by Shanks.

"I say kid, about them gosh darn letters, yer know," he began, "can't we fix this?"

"Will yer help me put up a racket on dad 'a 'stroys em?"

"I'll do anything."

"Dat's all right; den I 'stroys em. Shake. Now yer an' I's squared up."

Shorty Junior didn't go to the baby show that morning, as he had an engagement to meet some of the living curiosities he had advertised for to appear at his new venture.

He had temporarily hired a room on the third floor of a building in Broadway, to transact his preliminary business in, and thither he bent his steps.

Knowing he would be expected to "wet" every engagement he made, and being thoroughly acquainted with the particular weakness of most living curiosities, he provided himself with a big bottle of "enthusiasm," labeled "gin."

Shorty, after he arrived at his office, the applicants for situations began pouring in: Fat men and thin men, tall and short, pink-eyed women, boneless men, odd looking children of all colors and conditions, sword-swallowers, knife-jerkers, lightning-calculators, and a raft of other "curiosities," good, bad and indifferent.

He took down the names of those he wanted, and told them when and where to call upon him again.

Those that he did not want he told, in order to get rid of them quietly, to step right down stairs, and enter their names in a book.

The first man that called was a "fat" man.

He must have weighed any where over four hundred, and climbing the long stairs had made him as red as the setting sun, and hot as a mustard plaster.

"Mornin', mornin'," he puffed, vainly looking about for a chair big enough to hold him, and not finding one took two. "Fat man—show—hire me?"

After Shorty Junior had taken his name, and gave him his card he took his departure.

"Be Jove!" said the kid to himself, "must have dat cove, 'f it's on'y fer der rackets what's in him."

The next prominent party to come in was a man who announced himself as Mr. Stoutlad.

He took off four overcoats, one pea-jackets, and two cardigan jackets, and stood revealed—a bone.

That is to say, he probably weighed about forty pounds, and as he was fully six feet high he looked more like a lost shadow than a live man.

"Mr. Stoutlad," he said, in a voice that made the kid get right up off his chair. It was such a heavy, coarse, deep voice, seeming to come somewhere from away down stairs.

The kid gave him a card and bid him good morning,

and after he had got on his four overcoats and his three jackets he left.

"Must engage dat cove, too, 'f it's on'y fer dat voice he slings," said Shorty Junior.

Then came streaming in a lot of people, some of whom he hired, but most of whom he sent down below.

He was about to shut up for the day, when in walked a lot of old women, headed by a long, lanky, rusty rooster, looking like a fourth-class minister out of a situation, and not at all likely to get one.

"Hum," he began, taking off his dilapidated beaver and waving it towards the ladies; "the society for the annihilation of the—that is, for the suppression of, as I may say, gin."

"Well," said the kid, wondering what the deuce they could do in a show, "I ain't runnin' no bucket shop. If yer want ter treat der crowd, yer better histe 'em 'roun' der corner."

"Treat the crowd?" he repeated, solemnly, turning to the females, at which they all held up their hands in holy horror and moaned dismally: "Awful."

"No, young man," explained the seedy one; "we understand that you are about to open a show—"

"Sho pop," interrupted the kid.

"And what we wish to propose," he continued, as if delivering a forty-cent lecture, "is ah, this: To open a little prayer-meeting every afternoon in your room. We will have the sinners there, right in the very act, and we will, ah, knock the stuffin' out of them, if I may be allowed so forcible an expression."

"What did yer say yer name was?" asked Chips.

"Ahem! The Reverend W. Chossett Guppy, L.L.D. ASS., at your—ah—service," he replied.

"Guppy?" said the kid, smelling a racket. "I tinks I kin fix dat little ting fer yer. Ax der ladies ter step out er der room a moment an' let me wrestle yer in a private conlab."

"Certainly," answered Guppy, and he at once escorted the females into the hall.

As soon as his back was turned, Shorty Junior took the bottle of gin he had brought with him and emptied it in a pitcher standing on the table. A glass half full of water stood by the pitcher.

Mr. Guppy returned shortly, and sitting down, he and the kid had quite a talk. Finally Shorty Junior, after some remark, picked up the tumbler and drank the water.

"Ah, will you oblige me?" said Guppy. "I'm rather dry myself."

This is what the kid had been laying for.

Sling the pitcher, he filled the tumbler to the brim and handed it over.

Mr. Guppy took it, and whether he discovered what he was drinking or not, he never let up till he had drained it to the bottom.

He put down the glass and looked at our little hero for a full minute.

Then the muscles of his face relaxed, his solemn air melted away, and he looked as jolly as if he had had just bestowed on him a living worth twenty-eight thousand a year.

Suddenly he bounded to the middle of the floor, as light and airy as a ballet dancer.

"Hoop la!" he yelled, flourishing his broken down hat. "Hoorah!"

He began to sing:

"I'll bet my money on de bob tail nag,
Somebody bet on de bay."

And then he executed a wild and startling breakdown, which set the kid roaring.

The ladies rushed in quite terrified.

"Dear Mr. Guppy is enjoying another one of his inspirations," said an old dame. "Let us lead him forth."

"Chuck us yer card, ol' pard," cried Chips to him, while the tears rolled down his cheeks at the comic antics of the reverent fraud.

"Cert'nly; shere y'er," he spluttered out, and threw a greasy pasteboard on the table.

And then the old ladies marched him away, while he sang at the top of his voice:

"I'm a roarin' rantin' blade,
Of never a gal was I ever afraid."

"Mus' have him, sure pop!" mused Shorty Junior.

"He just chuck full er rackets, an' a hull show in himself."

In the evening, when Shorty Junior told his dad and Shanks of the adventures of the morning, they laughed heartily.

Next day was to be the last of the baby show; when the prizes were to be distributed, farewells spoken, and the whole concern wound up.

The kid, with the aid of Shanks, had laid out a racket to get hunk on his dad for that kick he had so kindly lent him.

At breakfast he managed, unobserved to pour into his old man's coffee a little laudanum, knowing that before long it would make him good and sleepy.

By ten o'clock on this last day, the show was crowded as it had never been before, and everybody was on the tip-toe of excitement to see who were the lucky prize winners.

Our party was on hand early to see that all went smoothly. About nine o'clock Shorty began to complain of being drowsy.

"Brace up, ole man," said the kid. Go ter bed at a 'spectable hour, an' den yer won't want ter wrestle wid slumber in der daylight."

Shorty Junior kept his eye on his dad, who, spite of all attempts, kept getting more and more sleepy, and at ten o'clock he saw him crawl silently away, and bounce in an unoccupied crib standing in an out-of-the-way corner.

Now was his time.

He at once got out a flaming poster eight feet high, with the following startling announcement:

LAST DAY.

Greatest Curiosity in the World!
A GIANT BABY!

ONLY FIVE MONTHS OLD, AND

Four feet high!

Born with teeth and can already talk.

Having placed this in a conspicuous place, he gently dragged the crib, wherein peacefully slumbered his dad, out to the middle of the floor. He covered him over, excepting his face, with long, white sheets, and put up a sign over him, reading:

THIS IS THE GIANT BABY.

HANDS OFF.

People came flocking in by the dozen to see the latest curiosity in the shape of an infant, and the kid stood at the head of the crib passing the visitors along and giving it to them something like this:

"Now den ladies an' gemmen, don't crowd, an' bustle 'long wid all der speed yer kin ter give der million orders a chance ter see dis greatest livin' an' strangest baby dat der world ever chucked its glimmers onto. Only five munts ol' an' speaks seven different languages all at once. Born wid a full set'er false

It didn't make any difference whether the prizes were deserved or not, remarks flew thick and fast.

"That little mutton-head get a prize?"

"Why, he's squint-eyed!"

"One leg's shorter than the other!"

"Is that dough-faced little thing going to get something?"

"Its nose looks like a hump of putty!"

"Ears big enough for a mule!"

"What a mouth! Look out, he'll swallow his crib!"

And then they would all join in one general hiss like a flock of geese.

"Who's the little runt giving out the prizes?"

"Much he knows 'bout babies!"

"Shoot him!"

"Bounce him!"

The balance of the prizes were quickly handed out, and while the audience crowded up to the platform to listen to a short speech by a reverend gentleman who had volunteered, Shorty Junior slipped away to get hunk on the growling mothers.

"Shanks an' dad," he said, finding those two worthies, who had been enjoying themselves to see the kid in such a bad fix, "der las' racket of der show. Gimme a han' an' we'll stir up more fun dan 'll las' fer a week."

They went to work quietly and with a will, and in five minutes had changed every baby in the place.

Girls in pink ribbons were taken off and exchanged

new venture in the show business that he had been using for the baby racket.

It was in a good situation and well adapted to his wants.

He advertised extensively, both by posters and in the papers, and decorated the outside of the building with flags, bunting and fearful pictures, from the roof right down.

One canvas represented the "ghost" biz. A blue mother knelt on a pink grave, and a yellow angel hovered over her with something in its hands that strongly resembled a stale cabbage, as if it was looking out for a good opportunity to fire it at her head. The whole of this bright and cheerful scene was set off by a green sun sinking behind a solid black sky.

Beneath this was another canvas representing an Indian war-dance.

In one corner the artist had painted a man, evidently a Turk from his gaudy dress, who stood mostly on his head, and labored under the trifling inconvenience of being obliged to maintain this awkward position, with six arrows sticking in his heart, and two in his boots.

The Indians themselves were dancing a wild fandango around a purple fire, while in the dim distance was seen a company of United States troops, drawn up as if patiently waiting the appearance of a paymaster, who had, in all probability, absconded with the funds.



Shorty hastily slid out of that crib, gave one glance at the sign over his head and dusted.

with an' chews tobacco an' smokes. Could do a double long an' dance when he was on'y a moment ol' an' is open ter fight any babe of his size an' weight in creation. Han's off, an' pass rite along."

But the ladies couldn't be driven away.

"How innocent he looks and only four months."

"What a brute of a baby!"

"He's getting whiskers!"

"And smells of tobacco!"

The occupant of the crib began to grunt and snore, and you could hear him three blocks off. Finally after a groan or two he stretched himself and opened his eyes.

And then he sat bolt upright and stared about him wildly.

"Oh, what a monster!"

"It's a man!"

And the crowd seeing it was a joke broke out in a prolonged din of laughter and applause.

Shorty looking as sheepish as a small boy caught at his mother's sweetmeats, hastily slid out of that crib, gave one glance at the sign over his head and dusted.

Soon after this Shorty Junior mounted the platform, and began handing out the prizes; and the comments on the winners, the mothers, and the kid himself were by no means complimentary.

In fact, they were so directly opposite that before he was half through, Shorty Junior was mad and on his ear.

"Wat wait, ol' gals," he mumbled to himself, "n' tooan. I pass yer out a racket fer dis dat'll trouble yer 'er lives, I'm a shin-plaster!"

for boys in blue, white headed babies were swapped for black, blue eyed, brown eyed, quiet babies, crying babies, twins, triplets and all were mixed up past finding out.

And then the three conspirators hid themselves from view and watched to see the trouble.

"Growl at me, will dey," said the kid, "now dey kin growl at each oder, 'cause we's Charley Rossed de hull of 'em."

Soon the mothers returned, those with prizes smiling and those with none, mad and sullen.

In one moment there was a perfect babel. Every mother screamed, every baby and every man swore. The noise was deafening and appalling, and excited females rushed hither and thither wringing their hands and crying out:

"Where's my Tommy?"

"Where's my little Sally?"

"This is a boy; mine was a girl!"

They quarrelled and fought for babies, pulled each other's hair, many tore some young ones apart, where two or even three would claim it, and insist on keeping hold of it, nobody was satisfied, all was wild confusion and such a scene was never looked upon before.

"Come on, dad," said the kid, amply satisfied with his revenge, "let's leave 'em ter settle it 'mong demselves, best dey kin."

And the three friends walked off to their hotel as jolly as they could be.

CHAPTER III.

SHORTY JUNIOR had hired the same building for his

There was a balcony for the band and more flags around it than countries to own them.

"Dat's der gall'nist crib in der world," said Shorty Junior, viewing it with pardonable pride; "an' I so traveled an' oughter know."

It certainly was a triumph of genius, and if open to criticism on the score of artistic beauty, was at least conspicuous and decidedly attractive to the masses, and as the kid was depending on the people and not on the critics for patronage, he had every reason to be amply satisfied.

Shorty Junior had had a big lot of small circulars printed, setting forth the merits of his great show, and while talking to his dad about the best way to have them distributed, overheard the following conversation:

"Got your horse here?"

"Yes, there he is?"

The kid looked and saw a two-horse wagon standing opposite and listened again.

"I'll bet I'll beat every man in the clothing trade this hitch, anyhow. I want you to take them hand-bills and load 'em in your wagon, and drive all over town and scatter 'em in every direction—chuck 'em out by the handful! Most of 'em will be picked up and read, and that's what I want."

"That's what I wants ter," said the kid to himself, and calling over his dad he explained things to him.

"Yer notice dem two snoozers confabin over dere? One's a clothin' man, an' todder's a driver. Now, here's a racket an' biz, both. Soon's der clothin' man

ramooses, I'll waltz der driver inter der beer shop an' fill him chuck up ter der neck, an' yer git some of der show han's ter help yer hide away dat pile er circulars in der hallway, an' fetch out all of mine an' put 'em in dere instead, un'erstan'?"

"All right. I tumbles," said Shorty, laughing, and he skipped away on his mission.

Finally the clothier went away, and Chips tackled the driver.

"Hello, ol' man," he said, "ain't seen yer in a dog's age. Yer lookin' corn fed and hearty. How's biz?"

"Fust rate," answered the driver, looking at the kid and wondering where he had met him.

"Yer slung a load'er trunks for me once, 'member?" asked Shorty Junior, shaking him heartily by the hand. "Come over an' hide away a little jig-water wid a feller."

The driver did not remember him, but when he said drink, he straightway made up his mind that he was a good party to know anyhow.

They adjourned around the corner and called for fluid, the kid taking beer, and the driver whisky.

The kid talked of business, the state of the country, hard times, and a dozen other things, keeping the driver drinking so steadily that he got red in the face and thick in his speech.

"Mus' go," he said, at length. "Got lot bills ter chuck 'roun'. Hope meet yer 'gain."

The kid, concluding that the exchange of circulars must be completed by this time, once more shook hands and left.

When the driver got back the merchant's bills had disappeared, and Shorty Junior's were there instead. He was too full to tell the difference, and loading them in his wagon, started off and distributed them pell-mell in every direction.

Toward evening, when they were all given out but a few hundred, he met the merchant himself.

"Put 'em all over where they'd do the most good, eh?" he asked smiling pleasantly.

"Got 'em all over town," answered the driver, now as full as a goat. "Here goes more!" and he tossed a handful to the sidewalk.

The merchant picked one up. The smile flew from his face, he turned first red then white, and then with an oath he fiercely demanded.

"This what you been giving out all day?"

"Cert'n'y," said the driver, with a hic, "circulars."

"You mullet headed sot!" roared the merchant, fairly dancing up and down with rage. "These ain't my circulars! some one has been foolin' you, d—n you!"

The driver spluttered and explained, the merchant raved and swore, and the kid, who was passing that way, chuckled with delight.

"Dat was a boss racket," he said to himself. "Got der bills all over der city, an' now let dem two snoozers fite it out it takes all winter."

If the outside of Shorty Junior's show was gaudy, the inside beat it two to one.

"How yer goin' ter run dis shebang, kid?" asked his dad.

"I'm a sailin' rite in fer ter humbug der public every time," he answered, "Ol' Uncle Barnum says der public gits up hungry every mornin' fer ter be tucked in an' dun fer, an' I'm der huckelberry what's goin' ter comedate 'em all der week, yer bet!"

"Bang out yer hangers on der outer wall, der ol' man's wid yer, rite long!"

"I dozen 'spect ter do much der fust week," explained Chips, leading the way inside, "cause I'll take me all dat time ter git ready; but after dat, look out for me! I'll give dis ol' town more rackets dan dey ever heard of afore, an' I'll make der people come in an' see me, spite of demselves."

The interior of the museum was well laid out for exhibition purposes, and was literally one mass of curiosities.

Indeed, Shorty Junior kept a factory in Pearl Street running day and night, turning out "original" specimens and curiosities of all descriptions.

Every object in the place was plainly labelled.

There was the only original Jacobs of a hatchet that George Washington used to chop down that cherry tree.

Attached to it was a neatly written card, reading:

"This is to certify that the above is the Real, Original, and only Hatchet.

(Signed.) "G. WASHINGTON."

Also could be seen the identical arrow used by William Tell, in his difficulty with the apple, with an autograph letter from William himself. There was the sword that Baalam wished for, when the ass spoke; a telescope used by Christopher Columbus, all sorts and varieties of war clubs captured from wild savages and cannibals, the original "Traitor's Gate" from London Tower, the suit of armor worn by Sir William Wallace, with his portrait in oil together with one of his wedding cards, about twenty skulls of various great men, from Alfred the Great down to Louis Napoleon, and thousands of other historical and natural curiosities too numerous to be set down.

His collection of wax figures was large, and as each one was dressed in the "original" clothes worn in life by the party represented, they alone were worth the price of admission.

Our friend, the fat man, added his presence to the show, also Mr. Stoutlad the living skeleton; and fat women, giants, giantesses, dwarfs, tattooed men, What Is Its, snakes, monkeys, happy families, stuffed and living animals, abounded in profusion.

Turn which way one would Shorty Junior had provided something either unique or startling to attract the eye, and, provided one was not too critical, nor too anxious to "know, you know," to serve the glorious cause of education.

He had trapeze performers and tumblers, sword-swallowers, a magician, a whole tribe of wild Indians

(from Baxter Street), ten cannibals, natives of the Island of Hichicoujiji, and man eaters (from the Castle Garden direct), a three-armed man, (one of his arms was taken off and hung up every night to allow its owner to repose in greater comfort), and one gentleman with no arms at all (until after the show was over, when two very brawny arms indeed always quickly came out from beneath a tightly fitting jacket), who carved all sorts of queer toys with a jack-knife held between his toes.

Up stairs, besides other attractions, was a large, "happy" family—at least the sign informed the public that the members were enjoying that blissful state of existence, although the solemn visage of the cat, and the looks of gloomy suspicion that continually haunted the not at all confident rats were not very reassuring—a petrified man and horse found in a mine in Arizona, and supposed, principally by the party who labeled it, to be original natives of the soil, three cardiff giants (made to order and warranted to be the Simon pure article), five automatic musicians, who put instruments to their lips and played short tunes at regular intervals, aided by a thick-headed boy and a hand-organ, concealed from general view behind the wall, and last, though by no means least, a panorama of Africa.

Flags, bunting, patriotic mottoes and pictures were scattered in all directions, and the scene, upon the whole, was at once grand, cheerful, entertaining, and one not easily to be forgotten.

The Reverend W. Chuseit Guppy, L. L. D., A. S. S., was engaged as general exhibitor and lecturer, and had added to the numerous other queer things a learned pig, who could spell out names, tell fortunes, and play cards.

He had one fault, shared in by the Reverend Guppy himself, and that was a chronic hankering for strong drink.

"How does yer like it, dad?" asked the kid after he had shown Shorty around.

"It lays rite over any ting New York ever seen before, since it was a town," said Shorty.

"Tain't nuffin' ter what I will make it," remarked Chips. "Jist wait till I gets up some of me startlers. I'll give 'em rackets, dad, lots of 'em. Humbug's der order of der day, an' 'fi don't scoop in a barrel of money outer dis, brand me fer a lunkhead, an' send me down ter Congress 'long wid der rest of 'em."

"Yer'll do it kid, I'm cert," replied his dad.

"Can't do ner more here jist now; what yer goin' ter do wid yourself dis afternoon?" asked Shorty Junior.

"Dunno; nothin' in 'ticular."

"Let's git Shanks an' take in a rival show."

"Dat's me; scoot 'long."

They soon found Shanks, and together they started out in quest of adventures.

They dropped into a museum on Broadway and took a look at the various articles on exhibition.

"What yer tink of dis?" asked the kid.

"Snide," answered his dad.

"No good; and if there was more of it, it would be worse," said Shanks.

"Yer cud chuck dis little 'un fer a cent inter my show an' ye'd never find it agin," remarked Shorty.

"Pipe der fat woman; she's a fraud. Shanks, yer chin ter der ole gal, an' I'll play holes on her."

Shanks soon engaged the seeming bulk of flesh in an earnest conversation, while the kid slipped alongside of her when no one was looking and gave her a sudden dig with an awl that he had brought along with him.

The result was startling.

From being a woman who looked to weigh at least four hundred pounds, she quickly dwindled down to quite an ordinary size.

She didn't notice her unnatural falling off at first, but when she did, she was the most demoralized-looking "fat woman" that was ever seen.

She gave one yell, and bouncing up, promptly disappeared behind a curtain, and was seen no more.

"I know'd it," said the kid with a large smile; "wears an Injin-rubber jacket, an' has herself blowed up ter any size dey wants."

After a quiet laugh over this, they passed along and halted to examine what purported to be the head and right arm of Jack Spratt, a noted murderer. A German, connected with the place, stood near by to answer such questions as curious visitors might ask.

"What's dis?" inquired the kid, addressing him.

"Dot's der arm an' der right head of Shack Spratts, der noted murderers," he answered.

"Who noted 'em?" inquired Shorty Junior, innocently.

"Vell, I dunno 'zactly, dot shuge, I s'spose."

"What did Jack do?"

"Vy, he makes out a hull family killed."

"Did dey seem ter enjoy der killin'?"

"How kin I told dot?"

"Wasn't yer 'quainted wid der folks?"

"Nine."

"Oh, tort yer was. Well, what'd dey do after dey was killed?"

The German looked at the questioner in blank astonishment, but the kid appeared to be as serious as a Quaker.

"Well, I can't tole dot," he replied. "Yer see dey vas dead."

"Oh, did dey die?"

"Mein Got! Yes, certainly. Den Shack he got arrested an' tried out —"

"Fer lard?"

"Nine, nine. Fer does murder. He got tried out an' scondemned, and vas hanged."

"What fer?"

"Oh, mein Got! Don't yer seen? Hanged up mid der neck, so. Den der doctors cut off his head an' arm off, an' give 'em mid us."

"Yes, yes," said the kid, looking as if he had finally got the whole matter at his finger points. "Eh, where's Jack now?"

"Didn't I tole yer," roared the German, almost crazy, "dat he got off his head cut off?"

"Did, did he die?"

"Oh, der divell! Yaas, he is ted!"

Shorty Junior took out his handkerchief, and putting it to his face, fell to sobbing violently.

"Did yer know Shack?" asked the German, visibly affected by his grief.

"No," said the kid, "I didn't know him; but jist suppose I had."

And he went on crying till suddenly, noticing a was figure in a glass case, he asked.

"What's dat?"

"Does is dey Dyin' Zouave," replied the German.

"What's he dyin' wid?"

"Mine Got! I can't tole sooch dings like dot!"

"How long yer had him?"

"Oh, six—seven years."

"Has he bin dyin' all der time?"

"I s'pose so."

"Awful long-winded. ain't he?" What's he dyin' wid?"

"Vy, don' yer see he vas shot?"

"Who shot him?"

"Mine Got an' himmel, I dunno!"

"Have ter set up wid him nites?"

The German rolled his eyes and groaned in agony.

"I feels sorry fer der poor cove," continued the kid, again going for his handkerchief. "Say, if he should git trough wid his dyin' in der course of a week er so,"

—here he handed the German an old paste-board given to him by some showman—"jist drop a postal card ter dat address, will yer? When he turns his toes up I'd like ter scoop in his plantin', fust rate."

The German nodded his head and went right out, evidently in pursuit of lager beer.

Shorty and Shanks, who had been quietly enjoying the joke of the kid, now joined him, and they went up stairs.

There was nothing at all attractive up there, and they were about returning, when Shorty Junior detained them to examine a large, stuffed crocodile. It was fully twenty feet long, and had its ugly jaws wide open, displaying its sharp teeth. Just behind it stood the figure of a man.

"Well," observed the kid, after a long look at the monster, and a peep down his capacious throat, "dere's a fine opinin' for a young man. Dad, does I appear sad, an' sorry-like?"

"No, kid, why?"

"Cause I's lookin' down in der mout."

"Dat joke 'snuff ter make a crocodile weep," said Shorty.

"Yes," ventured Shanks, "crocodile tears."

"Dat'd be terrible weep, too," added the kid, shoving his head within the monstrous jaws. "Dere, I's got it ter say I've had me head in a crocodile's mout anyhow."

"An' me ter," said his dad following suit.

"Well I'm gosh darned if you re goin' to leave me outside in the cold," exclaimed Shanks. "I'm goin' to have that to say, too."

As he stooped to do as his friends had done, Shorty Junior gave him a hard push with one hand, and with the other, snapped the crocodile's jaw together.

Shanks disappeared half way down its throat, and the sharp teeth catching in his clothes held him fast.

The kid and his dad, grinning all over, bolted for a place of safety.

Shanks kicked, plunged and roared for help. In his struggles he upset the figure of the man behind, and it tumbled through a glass case with a crash that quickly brought up the manager.

"What th' deuce you tryin' to do?" he yelled, rushing over and kicking Shanks vigorously. "Git outer here! I'll club th' life outer you!"

Shanks was mad enough as it was, and the kicking didn't soothe his ruffled temper a bit.

Exerting all his strength, he suddenly raised himself, and the shell of the crocodile with him, and turned about to kick back.

The result was disastrous.

The long body of the animal swept around the room upsetting wax figures, smashing glass cases, carrying everything before it and leaving in its wake utter ruin and chaos.

In its circuit, the jaws became loosened and Shanks was set free. Seeing the manager right in front of him, dancin' up and down, swearing, howling and tearing his hair with rage, he gathered up the body and fired it at him with so true an aim that it took him in the head and knocked him backward through a large looking glass.

Then he took to his heels and was out of that place in a second.

The kid and his dad laughed over this scrape till their sides fairly ached, and now that it was all over and he had come off scot free, Shanks had to join in the mirth himself.

"I'll forgive yer that racket, Chips," said he, "fer I had all the revenge I wanted on the manager."

"Well," mused the kid, "when dey got such ferocious critters as dat in a show, dey orter keep 'em muzzled."

"Dad," said Shorty Junior, early next morning.

"I'm off ter-day on a bran new lay."

"What's up now?" asked Shorty.

"I'm goin' ter take in der fox chase. Yer an' Shanks want'er go 'long?"

"Boy," answered his dad, briskly, "yer hit me jist where I live. Put me down in der list fer a hunter every time."

Shanks was wild to join in the sport, so after securing horses—Shorty Junior, taking Buster, of course—they boarded a train at Hunter's Point and were soon whirling away towards Hempstead.

They took seats in the smoking car and while enjoying their cigars who should walk in but their old

friend the fighting woman, boss heroine of the defunct baby show.

Not noticing the kid and his gang she sat down near the door, and pulling out a book, began reading.

A very gentlemanly appearing man promptly stepped up to her, and with a slight bow, said:

"Madam, excuse me; but this is the smoking-car. Hardly a fit place for a lady."

"Well, I've fit in wust paces than this, young feller," she exclaimed, slamming down her book. "I reckon you'd better give your chin a holiday an' perambulate off on your ear. I ain't none of your stuck-up things, an' if I wants ter take in a smoker I'd like ter see the man what'll pitch me out."

The polite man hastily withdrew, and the kid at once went over and took the vacant place beside her.

"How do?" said he, shaking hands with her. "Look-in' as smilin' as a big sunflower."

"Why, how on arth be you?" she cried, lifting Chips up from his seat and planting a resounding smack on his lips, at which a big Frenchman just opposite laughed loudly. "You're the chap what bossed the the baby meetin' an' passed me out a prize for Fightin' Tom. Pard, I'm right glad to see you."

"Taken a run down in der country fer yer helth?" asked the kid, not at all pleased with his kiss, and scowling at the frog eater who had laughed at him. "How's der boy?"

She was on her feet again in a moment, and turned about as fierce as a tigress.

The Frenchman, groaning, swearing and rubbing himself, slowly arose and picked up his basket.

"By gar! vat you mean, you voman, you! darn!" he spluttered.

"Who do you call a darn woman?" yelled the fighter. "I'll show yer, you claret-colored, wall-eyed frog!"

She made a savage kick at him, and her foot catching the basket, sent it up to the roof of the car, and both covers flying up, out came a half dozen full-grown chickens.

They flew wildly from one end of that car to the other, and set up a cackling and crowing that was deafening.

The passengers dodged out of the way of the frightened fowls and roared with laughter, while the Frenchman, now purple with rage, chased his property up and down, and used "cuss" words till the air was blue.

To add to his troubles the whistle sounded and off went the train, carrying him miles beyond his home.

After the kid and his party had enjoyed the sport, they adjourned to another car, and finding seats, conversation was renewed.

Shanks sat beside the fighter, Shorty just in front, and Shorty Junior right behind her, and alongside of a

brought it down hard on the reverend gentleman's head.

He howled with pain and fright, and tried to get away, but couldn't.

She kept yelling out:

"Let go my frock then. Let go!" and beating the poor man over the head till some of the passengers came to his rescue.

When the train moved on, she had torn herself loose, and was battling with half the men in the car, and from all appearances getting decidedly the best of it.

"She's der gamest old gal dat walks," said the kid, highly amused at the success of his trick, an' I tink I'll have ter fine a place fer her talents ter shine in der show."

After seeing the horses safely landed they walked up to the hotel, where Shorty Junior changed his clothes for a hunting suit he had brought with him.

Dressed in a red coat, jockey cap and top boots, he looked as nobby as all out doors.

After a "bracer" all around, our party mounted their steeds, and joined their fellow sportsmen.

Buster was feeling as fine as a fiddle, and was on his good behavior.

He seemed to scent the fun from afar, and was eager to be away.

"Tink yer'll be in at der death, kid?" asked his dad.

"Yer bet I will," replied Chips, all excitement, as he



She made a savage kick at him and her foot catching the basket, out came a half dozen full-grown chickens.

"He's red-hot an' still a heatin'," she answered, picking up her book, which proved to be the "Prize-fighter's Manual" she had been presented with, and putting it away. "I left him 'long with his aunt, an' as she ain't over strong, I reckon he'll 'bout half kill her fore I gits back. Yer see my old man, an' he's a tearer, bub, works down ter Greenport, an' I thought I'd histe down thar an' see him, an' if I can't ketch a job 'round the ship-yard at somethin', why yer see, I've been readin' in that there book you gimme 'bout gittin' your muscle up an' workin' yourself in good shape, an' sich, so I reckoned I'd go inter trainin'."

She was as full of fight and fun as ever, and the kid enjoyed her company first rate. He kept eyeing the Frenchman opposite, and was trying to think of some racket to get hunk on him for that laugh.

Just before they reached a station, the Frenchman got up and pulling a big basket from under his seat stood in the aisle holding it, waiting for the train to stop.

"Let's waltz inter der toder car," said Shorty Junior, to his companion. "More comferble in dere, an' dis is gittin' ter full of smoke, fer general health."

The fighting female consented, and getting up stood directly in front of the frog-eater.

The train came to a sudden halt, the fighter lost her balance—with some help from the kid—and tumbled back against the Frenchman with such force that she knocked him down, and not being able to save herself, sat her hundred and sixty pounds square on top of his stomach, which gentle burden knocked the wind out of him, and made him grunt like a stuck pig.

serious-looking man, who from his dress and high white choker, was evidently a minister.

The kid, happening to put his hand in his outside pocket, discovered that he had with him the awl that he had used the day before to prod the fat woman with, and he immediately thought of another racket.

Part of the fighter's dress overhung the seat, and the ever-restless Chips, while carrying on an animated chin over her shoulder, managed to run the awl through both dress and skirts and fasten it securely beneath.

Everything went on quietly till they neared Hempstead, when Shorty Junior arose, and bid the lady good-bye.

"Hold on, you," she cried; "I comin' down to that show of your'n next week. Wait a minute, can't yer, an' I'll see yer to th' platform?"

She attempted to get up, but the awl held her fast.

She compressed her lips and without looking around, exclaimed:

"Say."

No answer.

"You."

The clergyman looked steadily out of the window.

"Leave go my dress."

Still no notice and she getting madder and madder.

"Do yer hear?"

Still silent and serene.

"Well, I'll jist show you then."

She seized the heavy carpet bag she carried with her, and partly turning about, swung it vigorously and

caught the yelping of the hounds and the music of the horns. "I'm goin' ter take der "brush," fer money."

"Ye'll have ter give 'em a big dust fer it."

"Kinder of a dust brush, hey, dad?"

"Dus't yer do it?"

"I dust."

And he straightway dusted, and rode in among the huntsmen.

His arrival was hailed with a roar of laughter and cries of delight.

They all knew him by reputation, having heard of his many rackets, and made him as welcome as if he had been a king.

They rode away a jolly crowd, followed by farmers, boys, women, and darkies. Some were on horseback some in wagons, but the most afoot.

The dogs were loosened, and soon striking a scent dashed madly away in full cry, the horsemen with cheers and yells following after.

On they went, the pace growing hotter and hotter over fields, through patches of wood, up hill and down clearing fences, ditches, and whatever came in the way, all riding in gallant style, all excited, all striving by whip and spur to be the first in at the death of the fox.

After a run of five miles they began to thin out, and our party found themselves almost alone.

Right in front of them was a very high stiff fence, and on the other side of it a deep wide ditch full of water.

When Shorty looked at the formidable obstacle, he prudently pulled up and sought another route.

The kid went at it pell-mell, and pricking Buster with the spurs, he fairly lifted him over, and landing him on the other side, was away again straight after the hounds.

"Darn me, if I'll be beat by that little runt," cried Shanks, and he went at the fence and ditch with a will. Just as he thought all was well, his horse came to a sudden halt, and Shanks slipped gracefully over his head and went floundering in the water, where he had to remain till Shorty rode around and pulled him out. The kid kept straight ahead, and was the first in at the death, for which he received that much coveted prize "the brush," and was heartily congratulated on all sides by his fellow huntsmen, for his skill, daring, and splendid mount.

CHAPTER IV.

THE fox chase over and the brush stuck jauntily in Shorty Junior's cap, our jolly friends started for the hotel.

But not before they had received an invitation to attend a grand huntsmen's ball, to be given that evening at the mansion of Mrs. Smiler, the only lady who had followed the hounds on this particular day.

They promised to be there, and drove off at a rattling gait.

To gain the road they were obliged to jump a pretty stiff fence.

Shorty Junior and his dad cleared it handsomely; but Shanks came to grief.

Just before reaching the fence his horse, a vicious wretch, gave what is called a "buck leap," and sent the unfortunate Shanks skyward.

Relieved of his burden he followed the other nags, and the kid, full of mischief, seized him by the bridle and pricking Buster with his spurs dashed away, leaving Shanks to get back to the inn the best way he could.

In vain the long Yankee shouted and swore, Chips only laughed and rode all the faster, his dad keeping close up to him and enjoying the joke.

"He kin stretch his legs an' git up a fust-class holiday appetite fer his chuck," said the kid.

"Chuck! I tort dat chuck he got jist now would last him some time," replied Shorty.

They were about sitting down to a smoking supper, when Shanks arrived, hot, tired, dusty, and out of humor.

"I'll fix you for that, you conceited little runt you!" he cried, making a dash for the kid, who, expecting something of the kind, dodged just in time to send the panting walker over a small hot stove and head first into the fireplace.

"What yer doin' up dat chimney?" asked Shorty Junior, with a tantalizing grin. "Tink yer Sandy Claus, I reckon, don't yer?"

"I'll show you, you infernal idiot!" yelled Shanks, coming out with his face covered with ashes and soot.

"Wait till I git my claws on you!"

"I ain't waitin' dis year, an' no clause in der constitution 's goin' ter make me, eider!" exclaimed the kid.

"Shut up!" growled his dad. "If I hear any more sich bad jokes, I'll look yer both up in a clause-*it*. Wash the soot off yer chops an' come ter grub, Shanks."

"Yes, put on a new suit an' go fer yer chops," added the kid.

The savory smell of a smoking dish soon soothed the ruffled temper of Shanks, and he anchored himself and proceeded to fill up.

"What yer tink of der ball racket?" asked Shorty Junior, after supper.

"Tink we'd better take it in," said his dad, lighting a cigar.

"Don't yer reckon we had 'bout bawl 'nuff, down ter der baby show?" hinted the kid, bringing out the inevitable cigarette.

"Let's go to the ball by all means," put in Shanks. "That Mrs. Smiler, hey, Shorty? Lovely woman, ain't she?"

"Shanks, yer kinder mashed on dat female, I'm blowed 'f yer ain't," exclaimed Shorty.

"She's a widder too, an' slings half a million er money 'round," said the kid.

"A widder? You don't say?" cried Shanks, breaking out into a beaming smile.

"Go fer her bald-headed," suggested Chips.

"Scoop her in," added his dad.

"Well, you see," remarked Shanks, speaking with the air of a man who might be found handling a half million dollars at any moment, "you see, it may happen, hey?"

"Stranger things than that never come to pass," said Shorty Junior.

"She did take all powerful to me this afternoon. Did you notice it?"

"Course we did!" answered the kid. "Shanks, go in an' win. Dere's yer straight road leadin' ter fortune, an' a guide post on der way a pintin' it out. 'Fl kin help yer I'm wid yer."

"Thank yer, kid," and he shook our hero's hand. "I forgive you everything. Half a million, eh? I'll bet I'll make her Mrs. Shanks before I'm a month older."

At ten o'clock they arrived at Mrs. Smiler's, and were made heartily welcome.

Especially the lucky Shanks.

"Brace up, ole man!" whispered Shorty Junior to him; "it's fer half a million an' a beauty, so never say die."

The kid and his dad made themselves perfectly at home, and by their odd expressions, quaint and witty remarks, and the recital of some of their numerous adventures, at once made themselves universal favorites, and their company was much sought after, particularly by the ladies, who pronounced Shorty Junior the boss beau.

Shanks, dressed in the best the hotel afforded, and looking like a high-priced sunflower out for a holiday,

stuck close by Mrs. Smiler, seemingly as much to her satisfaction as his own.

He kept saying to himself, "It's half a million, old boy: get up a big impression, win her, and fix yourself for life."

There was no use denying it, Shanks was head over heels in love with Mrs. Smiler—and her money.

He spread himself and talked of all sorts of things, to amuse her, and succeeded.

The kid was as jolly as a young colt. He was kicking up all sorts of fun in his own way and indulging in rackets to an unlimited extent.

"Bet I raise der deuce 'round dis ole shebang 'fore I quit it," he observed to his dad.

"Better not," answered Shorty. "Dese high-toned galoots won't stan' yer nonsense, so tak' care."

"I'll risk it," he replied.

And he did.

Finding a stuffed fox up stairs, he fastened a long string about its neck, and watching his opportunity, suddenly precipitated it amongst the dancers, and quickly pulling it back, dashed down the long hallway and back again up stairs, with Reynard bumping along after him, and at the same time yelling at the top of his voice:

"A fox! A fox!"

The ladies screamed and sought safety on the top of chairs and tables; one or two fainted, and the gentlemen were all excitement.

"A fox!" they cried, taking up the yell.

"Where?"

"Get the dogs."

"Come on."

They armed themselves with sticks, canes and pok-ers, and began the hunt.

The kid popped the stuffed animal in a bed and covered it up with the clothes, seized a club and hunted as earnestly as the rest.

Somebody let the dogs loose, and they came dashing in the house, running hither and thither, upsetting furniture, breaking crockery, and barking their loudest.

What with the howling of the dogs, the cries of the men, and the smashing of household goods, bedlam seemed to have broken loose.

"Dat's a putty good 'un," grinned Chips, when quiet was finally restored. "Dat'll do fer a starter, an' now I'll gaze 'round fer more."

He discovered two old dames, painted and powdered, trying their best to make forty-nine look like sweet eighteen, dancing, in different sets, a quadrille.

They stood with their backs to each other, and the kid noticed that they both wore long ribbons about their waists, with the ends floating gracefully behind.

He tied these ribbons, beau catchers they called them, firmly together.

"Forward two!" yelled the leader of the band.

The two old dames smiled at their partners, bowed, sailed ahead about three steps apiece and suddenly sat down on the floor hard.

"Um!" gasped one.

"Ge-racious!" spluttered the other.

They were quickly removed, quarreled all the way to their rooms and left at once.

"Sich ol' woman orter be home mindin' der kids," mused Shorty Junior, immediately looking about for the next victim.

And he found one in Shanks.

That long, chinning Yank had monopolized Mrs. Smiler, the fair hostess, all that evening, and had made up his mind that he had fascinated her, and had her, as he put it, "dead to rights."

She had returned the soft pressure of his hand, or at least he flattered himself she had, and already in his glowing imagination he saw himself the head gun of the establishment, giving dinners, ordering around the servants, and making the money fly right and left.

The kid rudely awoke him from this pleasant dream.

"Why, Shanks, ol' man," he said, addressing him, "where yer bin all der evenin'? I's quite lost track of yer; here, 'low meter interduce yer ter a gemmen yer orter know," and he brought up a tall, broad-shouldered, easy-going man. "Dis is a fren' er mine, Mr. Smiler, husban' of der lady by yer side."

"Good gord!" moaned Shanks, and at that moment you could have knocked him down with a feather.

He shook hands with Mr. Smiler and quickly stole away, the sickest looking and most badly sold party in all Long Island.

"Tort yer said she was a widder, kid?" whispered his dad, watching Shanks stealing off to grieve over his blighted hopes.

"Knowed she was married all der time," answered Shorty Junior, with a most amused expression, "but mus' keep der pot er bilin', cause we don't strike der 'ristocrats every day."

"Well," mused Shorty, moving off, "yer are de very wust dat ever got loose."

Soon after this the company were startled by a series of loud screams proceeding from an upper chamber, and rushed up to find out what was the matter.

They discovered that a colored woman, a servant, was the sole proprietor of the unearthly yells.

She had turned almost white, and was trembling like a leaf.

"What's der matter wid chew?" asked Shorty Junior, who was one of the first to reach the spot, and at once dropped to the racket. "What yer givin' us?"

"Der dar lam'!" she cried, rolling her big eyes.

"Der fox!"

"The fox?"

"What of it?"

"I war just olimbin' in der bed, an' dar, gemmen, dar der fox war right atween dem quilts."

"Where is he now?"

"Why, gemmen, I war dat kerfummixed dat I grab him by de neck an' chuck him slam bang through der winder."

The kid looked at the broken glass and sash, and grinned all over.

"Dat's der same ol' fox, every time," he muttered.

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Smiler, "that animal must be caught. Come, what say you to a hunt by star-light?"

"Agreed! Agreed!" was cried on every side; and making a bolt for the stables, most of the party mounted horses, the hounds were unloosed, and away they went helter-skelter.

"Well," observed Shorty Junior, who had remained behind, "f huntin' fer a stuffed fox don't make a sick run, yer kin advertise me fer a 'bacca sign."

Going towards the house he ran across a band of musicians tooting away for dear life and three dollars a head.

They had been posted outside in a sort of summer house for the benefit of promenaders; but the night proving too chilly for that sort of enjoyment, they were wasting their sweet strains on the midnight air.

"Wonder 'f can't work dem up in a racket?" thought the kid. "I'll try it on an' see if it fits, anyhow."

After a little prowling around he found himself in a large dining-room. It was entirely deserted, and a long table in the center was loaded down with refreshments. Evidently supper was about being served just as the gentlemen bolted off after that fox.

"Dis'll do, fust rate," exclaimed he, with a chuckle.

He opened a window leading out on a piazza, and crossing over to the summer house, invited the musicians to come in and dine.

"Don't yer fellers make a bit of noise," he directed, "'cause ye'll 'sturb der dancers. Eat an' drink all yer kin, an' be darn quick 'bout it, too."

That band of delighted tooters had struck a bonanza.

They had never sat down to such a meal before in their lives, and the way they sailed in and made a wreck of that banquet was simply astonishing.

They hardly left a chicken leg, and as for wine, not enough remained after they had finished to make a morning cocktail for a year-old baby.

"A clean sweep by jingoes!" said the kid, hugely delighted.

He started back to the drawing room and on the way met his dad.

"Er say, kid," asked Shorty much excited. "What we goin' ter do wid Shanks?"

"Why what's der matter wid him? Tuck a dose of col' pizen an' goin' to croak?"

"No, but he's so dispirited over der loss of dat female an' her sugar, dat he's filled himself plum' up ter neck, an' now he's as drunk as a biled owl."

"Tell yer what yer do dad," said the kid, dropping on still another racket, "yer git him out'er der house quiet as yer kin, an' fetch him over ter der stable. I's quainted wid one of der new coachmen, an' I'll git him ter take him ter der hotel."

Shorty started for Shanks, and Chips went to hunt up a driver.

"I say, young fellow, who's coachman be you?" he inquired of a tall man in livery.

"Muster Spook's sir."

"Yes, dat's der name. Well, say, yer boss's slightly tight; little off his nut," said the kid.

"He allers gits that way," answered the man.

"All right," thought the kid, "struck der right party der fust time."

"He'll be out here in a minute," he said to the driver, "an' yer better git him home. Live far from here?"

"'Bout eight moiles, sur."

"Dat'll do; here he comes; jump on der box."

Shorty came up with Shanks, who was too far gone to know anything at all. He had pulled his coat collar up about his face so that he should not be recognized. Shorty Junior bundled the long Yank into the coach and closing the door, said to the driver:

"Git 'long wid him now, fast's yer kin."

And away went the unconscious Shanks on his long journey.

Shorty returned to the house, but the kid, bent on further mischief, took the balance of the coachmen around to the dining room to pick up what they could, while he stole back to the stables, and unhitching a dozen different horses from as many different coaches, mixed them up and reharnessed them, so that not one of the vehicles had its own rightful team.

"Dat'll boder 'em I bet a cent," he said, and followed in the footsteps of his dad.

He had hardly got in the house before the huntsmen returned, tired and hungry.

They hadn't found anything that looked like a fox, of course, and were disappointed and considerably out of humor.

"A good supper will set us all right," said Mr. Smiler. "Come gentlemen, give your arms to the ladies."

They filed down to the dining-room, and the great doors were thrown open.

Mrs. Smiler took one glance and fainted.

"Good gracious!" gasped Mr. Smiler, and turned as white as a sheet.

The room was empty and the supper eaten.

"Where is the supper?"

"Who's been here since I've been gone?"

"Looks like cold comfort."

"Sold, by Jove."

"Kid," whispered his dad, "dat's some of yer work, for a house an' lot."

"Yer right, ol' man," he answered in a low voice; "an' I reckon we'd better amble off on our ears, 'cause der's more to come yet."

The failure to capture a meal put a damper on the party, and they soon broke up. Spite of Mr. Smiler's apologies, and liberal offer of a reward for the discovery

of the joker, wrappers were put on and coaches ordered.

Then came the row of the evening. No coachman could pick out his own carriage, and they all soon became as badly mixed as their horses.

They swore and howled at each other till they were hoarse.

"You dar', git down off dat kerriage!"

"D—n yer ould carriage; this is my team anyhow."

"Where the devil's my off horse gone off ter?"

"I'll break yer back if yer don't lave go that tame of mine."

They got wilder and wilder, and from words came to deeds.

Curses, yells, and the sound of blows filled the air, while the ladies screamed, and the gentlemen tried in vain to part the combatants.

"Come 'long, dad," said the kid, full of laughter, "if dey ever drops on us dey won't leave 'nuf ter ter git up a funeral wid."

They put spurs to their steeds, and soon got back to the hotel.

"Had a reglar high daddy racket ter dat hop, hey, dad? Bet dey won't forget us very soon," chuckled the kid.

"Don't want ter see none of dem 'gain fer a year, for fear dey'll go fer my scalp," replied Shorty, with a

he started back for the hotel, swearing every step he took.

It came on to rain soon after he got under way, and he had to foot it over the muddiest of roads and in the foulest of storms, for eight good miles.

He got back to the hotel about daylight, wet through, played out, mad, and with his mind firmly made up to go right in and kill the kid the very first thing he did.

But that mischievous imp had anticipated a row, and prudently barricaded his door so strongly that no entrance could be forced.

He heard Shanks outside, and to add insult to injury, called out to him:

"I say, ol' man, how did yer find Mrs. Spooks, an' all der little Spookers? Did yer git any show ter talk ter a ghost or a spook on yer way? 'F yer did I hope yer spook to 'em kindly."

Shanks retired growling, and it was late next morning before he got up.

When he did Shorty informed him of the adventures of the night and he was amused in spite of himself; but swore at the same time, to get awfully hunk on Chips at the first opportunity.

After a hearty breakfast they took the cars for New York.

Shanks was dull and gloomy and soon went asleep. Shorty bought a ten-cent book, and got deeply interested in it, and the kid gazed silently out of the win-

On the boat the kid found eighteen wagon loads of cabbage belonging to as many different farmers.

Here was his opportunity to get hunk.

"Quainted wid Smith Smithers?" he asked one of them.

"Well, er reckon er be groceryman," was the answer.

"That's him," said the kid. "He wants ter buy a lot of cabbage. Will yer sell him?"

"Guess yes. Cash man, he is."

And a bargain was quickly struck, not only with him, but with the rest of the farmers also.

"Gemmen," said Shorty Junior as they were about leaving the boat, "jist tell der clerk it's all rite, an' pile yer vegetables on der walk. I'll be dere ter pay yer meself for yer leaves."

The countrymen were delighted with their sale and drove off.

"Come, dad, Shanks, les go over an' take in der fun," said the kid jumping on a car. "Can't chuck two hours of solid chin at me fer notin', not 'f knows myself."

By the time they reached the groceryman's all the farmers had unloaded, and such a monument of raw cabbage as they had heaped up is seldom seen.

The walk was full of them, the street was blocked with them, it was cabbage all over and without end.

Hungry horses reveled in cabbage, boys rolled in them, the store clerks were wild, truckmen swore at



The small boys of the neighborhood, showered the officer with cabbages till the air was thick with the flying vegetable.

heartily laugh over the mishaps of the evening. "Spects Shanks is sound 'sleep long ago."

"He's all rite," said the kid, grinning, "an' I'm off ter bed."

But Shanks wasn't all right by any manner of means.

He had been driven along till he had reached the Spooks' mansion, where he was landed on the front stoop and the bell pulled by the coachman, who, having done this much, as he had probably a hundred times before for the real Spooks, mounted his box and drove to the stable.

The door opened and a female appeared.

"Pretty time of night to come home," she cried in a voice of vinegar. "Drunk as usual, I suppose. Oh, you heartless brute."

"S'all rite, ol' gal," hiccuped Shanks, trying to pass her. "Show me up mer (hic) room. Loss 'er fortune 'n nite, take pound arsenic fust thin' mornin' (hic) mornin'."

"Oh, my!" she cried, with a prolonged shriek, getting a look at our friend, and not recognizing in him her own Spooks. "Help! help! robbers! murder! help!"

Doors flew open, lights flashed and three men rushed down stairs armed with clubs and revolvers.

"A strange man! Oh my! Murder!" howled the frantic female.

Before Shanks could say a word he was seized by the men, clubbed down the hallway and kicked out into the road.

This partially sobered him, and picking himself up

dow, thinking up new rackets to make his show even more attractive and talked about than it was.

After a while, a greasy-looking man, smelling of soap, candles and potatoes, a sort of small-measure, corner-grocery looking man, sat down in the empty seat beside him, and at once began to talk.

He was a bore of the deepest dye.

He told the kid his whole history, attempted to get off two or three comic stories—quite melancholy enough to have been whispered in the ear of a corpse, buzzed about crops, war, politics, and dozens of other different things, jumping from one subject to another without the slightest warning, and talking so fast that Shorty Junior could hardly get in a word edgewise.

And the kid was on his ear in the worst way.

He couldn't shake the man, for he was penned up in a corner, and what made him particularly mad was, that Shanks woke up and enjoyed his miserable situation enormously.

When the bore finally left the cars he handed the kid his business card, with the remark:

"Young man, call upon me, and I'll talk to you more."

"Tank der Lord, he's gone!" said Shorty Junior.

"Der miserble ole tongue wagger, wonder who shi e anyhow?"

He examined the card and read on it, "Smith Smithers, Grocery, 8th Ave."

"Fi ever git a hack at yer, Smith Smithers, I'll 'stonish yer," he muttered.

Our party took the 34th Street boat to cross to the city.

being delayed, people came running from all directions to see what the trouble was, and industrious old women, at convenient opportunities, lessened the pile as rapidly as possible.

Several policemen pushed their way through the crowd and sternly ordered, "them cabbages removed."

Smithers himself, groceryman and bore, came up puffing and panting to learn the cause of such an unusual commotion, and was at once seized by an officer.

He immediately began an oration that bid fair to last into the night, but was out short and dragged off for blockading a public thoroughfare.

The small boys of the neighborhood, bribed by the clerks with sundry apples, attempted a rescue, and showered the officer with cabbages till the air was thick with the flying vegetable.

"Come on," cried the kid, not stopping to see how the row was going to end. "We'd better git up an' git!"

They jumped into a hackney coach, and were off on the way to the show, shouting with laughter.

By the time they arrived there and got inside it was quite late in the afternoon, and the Christmas pantomime was on.

A word about this same pantomime.

In order to increase the many attractions of the show, Shorty Junior had had a stage erected in the main hall in order to bring out such pieces as he thought would prove popular and help fill the house.

The first play brought out was a Christmas pantomime entitled:

NAUGHTY SHORTY.

OR,

THE GOLDEN GOOSE THAT LAID THE BAD EGG.

It was got up with new and beautiful scenery, a grand transformation, lots of tricks, and was as full of fun as it could be.

Not only did the pantomime itself make a hit, and fill the house to overflowing, but the manner in which it was cast, and played was the talk of the town.

The clown was played by Mr. Stoutlad, the celebrated living skeleton. He was the owner of a big mouth, and a long nose, and when he got in a suit of striped tights, he looked more like a wandering bone than ever, and his every appearance was greeted with roars of laughter.

Pantaloon was taken by Mr. Buster, a giant that stood eight feet high, and to see the living skeleton knock this enormous man about as if he was a mere child, was the height of ridiculousness.

The sprightly harlequin was done by our heavy friend, the fat man, who pulled down the scales at four hundred. He was the oddest looking figure in tights that ever was seen, and the clumsy way in which he rolled about the stage, swearing like a bull was simply immense.

The lovely columbine found an impersonator in Miss Minnie Thin, who was advertised in the bill as the tallest woman in the world. She danced like a Hot tentot, and was almost as graceful as a cow.

During the course of the play, several dances occurred, which were executed by a full ballet of fat women, none of whom weighed less than two hundred and fifty. Their outrageous steps and awkward groupings never failed to elicit round after round of applause.

It was certainly the oddest and most comic production New York had ever seen, and the people flocked to witness it night after night.

As Shorty Junior and his party entered, the stage hands were having a high old racket with Stoutlad, the clown—a racket not down in the bills.

He had been doing a pole act in which, by the aid of a hook and a rope, he was hoisted up to the top of a long stick, where he went through with numerous startling feats.

He had finished his business, but the hands wouldn't let him get off the boards.

Every time he would attempt to retire, they would hoist him up, to his intense disgust and the delight of the audience.

Finally, when they had him in the air, two scenes were run together, which, catching him across the middle, almost broke him in two.

As he was yanked inside his curses could be heard all over the house.

In the next scene he got hunk on the fat man, who had been highly delighted at the clown's misfortunes.

First the tall columbine danced across the stage, and then came the fat harlequin, followed by clown and pantaloon.

The harlequin, after a trick or two, attempted to dive through a door and disappear.

The trap not being opened wide enough for him, he went half way through and stuck fast.

The clown seeing this, quickly got a whip, and the way he made the dust fly out of that fat man was a caution.

He could be plainly heard begging for mercy, and the audience, knowing that this was no regular part of the play, laughed and yelled themselves hoarse.

CHAPTER V.

The fat harlequin was finally released and the play went on.

Shorty Junior's attention was attracted to a tall countryman in the audience who seemed to be greatly excited and all wrapped up in the performance.

He had evidently forgotten that he was at a show, and thoroughly believed in everything he saw done on the stage.

He would laugh at the comic antics of the clown so heartily that his mirth would become infectious, and the whole audience would roar without exactly knowing why.

He kept passing remarks that kept the people about him on the broad grin, and he volunteered all sorts of information to the actors themselves.

"I swow ter gosh!" he exclaimed, "this 'r play beats tuckwheat cakes an' sassage tew ter one. I bet in th' end that'r fat feller marries th' gal an' that'r lean cus gits sent up fer seven years."

Just here the clown bounded on the stage and concealed himself in a box.

He was followed by the harlequin, who pretended to be looking for him.

And that long countryman rose right up with a look on his face as if he was conferring the greatest of favors, and at the same time pointing at the box, cried out:

"Hey, I say yeou, mister thar, th' bone chap yer lookin' fer is rite inter that'r chist; seen him go in me-self. Didn't hi?" appealing to the parties about him. "Go fer him like sixty!"

Everybody laughed and applauded, and the harlequin danced over to the box, looked in, and turned the inside of it to the audience.

It was empty!

The surprised countryman got right up again and looked the picture of disappointment.

"Well, I swow ter gosh!" he exclaimed, "if he ain't th' slipp'riest chap I ever run across. I'll ber gum dam! But, mister, he was thar!"

He sat down again and continued his comments, until four ruthless ruffians, armed with clubs, and led on by the clown, who carried an immense tin sword, surrounded the harlequin, and were, to all appearances, about to kill him.

Then the countryman, all excitement, leaped to his feet and made a wild dash for the stage.

He had a big hickory cane in his hand and meant war.

"Hold on thar, yer tarnal villains," he shrieked; "give the fat man a show till I git up thar among yer, an' we'll fight the hull darn crowd er yer."

He was immediately surrounded by ushers and showmen and persuaded to retire; which he finally did to the enthusiastic plaudits of the entire house.

"Well," said Shorty Junior, who had been a highly amused spectator of the scene, "if he ain't der freshest old haymaker I've seen in a year. He's so fresh dey orter hang him out next summer in der sun an' let him spile. I say, dad, s'pose we takes him 'round on der stage; tink we kin git up a racket on him?"

"Shouldn't wonder, kid; les try it on."

Shorty Junior shook hands with the countryman and at once began a conversation.

"Ain't much used to teaters?" he said.

"Niver in one afore in me life," answered country.

"Yer doesn't say so. Like ter go 'round der show an' see how der old tings worked?"

"What I reound onto that er stage? Yeou jist bet I would, little feller."

"Come 'long, den, an' I'll do der pleasant an' 'greeable fer yer. I's der 'prietor of dis ranch."

"What! Be yeou be th' head boss of this 'r amusement place? Why, when yer git yer growth an' be's tall as I be, ye'll be managin' five or six circuses, an' er panerammy, I shouldn't wonder a bit."

The kid led him around behind the scenes, and he got wild and all mixed up in no time.

He tried to make love to the fat ballet women, but they shook him cold. Then he wanted to narrate his whole family history to the harlequin, but that gentleman of much avoidupois, and sweat, hadn't time to listen to him.

He was standing on the stage, and a scene suddenly opening, he found himself facing the audience and surrounded by short-skirted ladies.

In his confusion he started to bolt off at the wing, but stumbling over a wooden bench—fixed up to resemble a bank of lovely flowers—he plunged forward head first, and in a twinkling, disappeared down through a trap.

The house howled with glee over this, and the kid, after finishing his own hearty laugh, fished the countryman up and restored him to a place of safety.

"Gehwhiteker!" said he, "thought I was bound rite through fer China, an' begin ter smell tea. This is th' afiredis place I ever struck; er feller never knows whar ter git."

His troubles were not yet over.

The kid, after speaking to one of the hands, led the countryman to the back of the stage and showed him a trick scene, representing a goldsmith's house with a great arm and hammer over the door.

He had seen this from the front and been so deeply interested in it that he had got up several times and shouted to the actors.

"Ta' care! Don't go nigh that tarnal hammer or it'll riz up an' floor yer."

The kid explained to him how it was worked.

"Yer see, the man ter be hit wid it mus'tan' jest here," placing the countryman in the desired spot—"Then yer have ter give der signal ter der feller behind dat's runnin' it, gen'ly by a clap, dis way—"

He brought his hands sharply together, the hammer descended with a rush, and hitting the countryman square on top of the head, knocked him down.

"An' away yer goes. 'Scuse me, I didn't know she was loaded."

The kid grinned and helped his victim to his feet.

"Come 'long wid me now," he continued, "an' I'll show yer der gran' transformation scene dat's jest 'bout ter come off."

As is usual in such last scenes, at first all is one mass of bright clouds. When these roll away the real business begins.

Shorty Junior led his friend to the middle of the stage—they were concealed from view by the clouds which from the back were nothing but several stretches of very dirty canvas—and seated him in a chair made gay with artificial flowers.

"Now yer stay rite here," he said, "an' ye'll see der puttiest piece of work dat was ever got up. It'll stonish yer fer yer trouble I'll bet. Sit right still where yer are, an' don't move an' yer kin see der hull of it."

The kid then retired.

The clouds slowly rolled away, everything began to turn around—excepting country, who remained stationary and deeply interested—brilliant lights flashed, two enormous swans floated gracefully in sight, beautiful women slowly emerged from gorgeous flowers, sweet music filled the air and what with the ever changing colors and new beauties flashing into view on every side it was a picture of fairy land that elicited round after round of applause.

The countryman was enjoying all this amazingly, when suddenly and without warning he found himself moving.

Going up, up, up.

He tried to jump from his chair, but to his dismay found that he was fastened.

He began to shake, for he thought that in another moment he must be seen from the front; but four large rose leaves quickly came up and hid him from view.

"Reckon th' ol' thing's all right after all," he said.

Still he could feel himself going up higher and higher.

Then he stopped.

And the leaves that sheltered him turned gracefully over, and he found himself high over all the glittering scene beneath, sitting in a broken goose egg, in full sight of everybody in the place.

There was one moment of silence, and then the audience broke out in a perfect howl.

"Pipe der countryman!" yelled a small boy.

"Chuck him up one of der fat women!"

"How high does der goose hang now!"

"When did yer shell out?"

"Oh, whater goosel!"

"I goose he wishes he'd stayed home?"

The house rang with hoots, yells, cat-calls, whistles, and gags for fully five minutes.

Then the voice of the countryman was heard above all the din.

"Lemme down outer here, goll darn yer! I'll kill somebody for this! I'll fetch the hull State of New Jersey over here, an' clean out yer darn show! Lemme down, I say! I kin lick the snoozer that put this er job up onto me 's easy fallin' offer log! Lemme at him!"

The curtain had to be rung up half a dozen times before the people were satisfied, but finally it came down for good, and the countryman was released.

He was boiling with rage, and full of fight.

"Lemme at that'r little runt of er boss till I chaw him up an' spit him out. Gimme er hack at th' fat man till I knock th' stuffin' outer him. Chuck me that'r bone of er clown till I break him in pieces. Who is yer head fightin' man anyhow? Trot him out till I 'nihilate him!" he yelled, as he wildly pranced up and down the stage.

"Yer want'er git right at th' real boss of this place?" asked asupe.

"That's it. Lemme at him."

"He's behind dat wing dere."

Doubling his fists, the countryman rushed to the spot pointed out, and found himself confronting the kid's biggest giant.

A ferocious looking man, eight feet high, broad in proportion, and as strong as an ox.

He looked like a dwarf beside this Hercules.

"Be you the fighter for the house?" he asked, in the mildest possible tone, the courage all oozing out of him at the sight of this mountain of muscle.

"That's my little business," answered the giant, taking the countryman by the hand and squeezing it till he nearly squirmed off his legs.

"Thank yer," said country, when he was released, his pluck now gone entirely. "I'm much obliged ter you; an' if ye'll jist show me the right quickest way outer this place, I'll be more obligid yit."

He was shown the road out, and went away muttering:

"I'll be gosh bunged! 'Fever you ketch me inside 'nuther show s'long's I live, yeou write hum to my parients ter shoot me on sight."

"Come 'long, dad," said Shorty Junior, who, not caring to get into a row in his own place, had been an amused but concealed spectator of the Jerseyman's discomfiture. "Tink we'd better slide up towards der hotel, an' take in a cargo of provisions."

"Dat's me, kid. I'm hungry as a starved alligator. But what's come of Shanks?"

"Dunno. Isn't seen him fer an hour."

"Bet he's gone off ter fill up on cocktails. He can't seem ter git over der loss of dat widdar 'tall."

"What'd he do wid 'er widdar?"

"Widdar me up 'fi know; but I'll bet 'f he couldn't make der widdar fly he could her money."

They soon got to their hash house and after washing and fixing up, they went down to dinner.

"Didn't see nuthin' of Shanks yet?" inquired Shorty.

"Not a fedder of him; but his absence can't spile mer appertite fer a cent," answered the kid taking a seat.

Just as he did so a blonde swell of the very first water, dressed in the extreme height of fashion, and using a large eyeglass every time he ventured on a remark, entered the dining room.

Upon seeing Shorty Junior, he stopped, up went the glass to his eye, and he indulged in a long stare.

"Eh, be gad! pon honor, yer know, extremely remarkable looking fellah, yer know," he observed to a friend. "S-s-s-o, sh-sh-short, yer know, be gad, an' so extremely comical, yer know, an', an', an' all that sorter thing."

He dropped his eyeglass and took the chair alongside of our little hero.

"Looks funny does I?" muttered he to himself, mad enough to eat the swell for his dinner. "Fi don't make yer look funny 'fore yer gits tro' wid yer grub, I'll have a thousand pictures took of merself an' give 'em ter der poor."

The swell was eternally in trouble. He would drop his eyeglass in his soup and then look all over for it. Finding it, he would fish it out, wipe it off on his napkin, and faintly murmur:

"Eh, be gad! Good gwacious!"

And he would drop, first his knife, and then his fork, and call loudly for the "waitah" to come pick them up.

"Dem annoying, yer know, ter be 'bliged to eat at er public table with all sorts of twashy people, an' all that sorter thing, be gad!" he said to his friend.

Every time he made a remark he would turn quite around, so that his back would be to the kid.

Just in front of the swell, and close to him stood a big roasted turkey.

Shorty Junior watched his opportunity, and while the dandy was engaged conversing with his friend, he slyly tied the long ribbon that held his eyeglass and was worn about his neck, to one of the turkey's legs.

"What der deuce is that?" then cried the kid, loudly, suddenly shoving back from the table as if startled.

The swell on the spur of the moment also started back and started up.

And the turkey immediately flew from its bed of gravy and struck him square in the bosom.

It dangled backward and forward on the ribbon, dropping grease on his vest and pantaloons.

The force of habit is strong. He dove for his eyeglass to see what the trouble was.

And finding the turkey where the glass should have been he popped it up to his eye instead. Everybody about the table roared.

"Damnation!" spluttered the swell. "Be gad, yer know—"

He threw the turkey from him and the ribbon breaking it skipped away into the lap of an old lady sitting opposite.

"What do you mean, you puppy, by throwing this bird at me!" she cried, at the same time hurling it back.

It took him in the head and knocked him over, and the dressing plastered his face.

"Er, be gad!" he faintly moaned, "she's knocked me brains out!"

He was promptly removed by the waiters and order was soon restored.

"Tort I'd make him look funny fore I got trough wid him," remarked the grinning kid, and finished his meal in peace.

After his dinner he and his dad retired up stairs and out came cigars and cigarettes.

The kid looked at the bright blazing fire and blew out cloud after cloud of smoke.

"Dad," said he at length, "I's got a bran new wrinkle."

"Trot her out, bub, an' let's ser what der critter looks like," answered Shorty.

"Dat settles it; den I'll go it."

"How der yer propose ter work der thing?" asked Shorty, coming down to business.

"Why, I'll fix up a place fer 'em and send out agents ter gadder der goats in," answered the kid. "We'll scour the Dutch Hills, ransack der back of Brooklyn, an' scoop in all 'round Jersey City an' Hoboken. I'll take 'em from wherever I kin git me hooks on 'em. Der premiums is what'll fetch 'em, an' if we don't have a high old racket an' collar der dollars, yer kin bounce me up ter der hoss market an' sell me fer a sick mule."

"When yer goin' ter begin?"

"Ter-morrer mornin', an' no postponement on 'count of der wedder. I say, dad, it's gettin' 'bout show time an' if yer'll skip down an' keep yer eagle eye on der box office fer a little while, I'll bounce 'round an' see 'f I can't hunt up old man Shanks."

"I'm 'greed. Capture der lad an' fire him in his little bed."

Shorty went off to the show and the kid started out on a search for the Yankee.

"Bet I finds him full as a tub an' soun' 'sleep in some gin mill," he said to himself, "Didn't tink a little racket 'd pull der ol' boy down like dat, or I'd passed it out ter him lighter."

He inquired for him in different places and visited most of the barrooms in the neighborhood.

"Not much," chuckled the kid, "I didn't ask yer ter drink, on'y asked yer 't yer ever ~~deft~~ drink. I see yer does an' I's satisfied."

It galled the chap to have the laugh turned on him, but he paid his money and again began talking to his friends.

"Tell yer what we had for breakfast this mornin'," he said. "Venison steak, scrambled eggs—"

"I knows all 'bout dat egg business," broke in the kid.

"What do you know about scrambled eggs, anyhow?" angrily asked the clerk.

"Why, I knows dat yer lan'lady gives yer fellers one egg for breakfast, an' yer all scrambles ter it."

His friends laughed the clerk out of the room, and he went away as mad as hornet.

"Ain't givin' myself 'way fer a sardine dis week," said Shorty Junior, and then he took his leave.

The next place he struck he found Shanks. He was lying in a back room, plumb tight and sound asleep.

"How long's he bin here?" asked the kid.

"'Bout an hour. Come in er bilin', took four drinks an' crawled in yonder fer er snooze."

"All rife. Let him be dere a while longer, an' I'll come back an' take him home."

He hurried away and dove straight for an under-



"What do you mean, you puppy, by throwing this turkey at me?" she cried, at the same time hurling it back.

"I tinks dis is a startler, an' dere's heaps of money in it."

"Yeraller got a sharp eye on der sugar, kid—give der ol' thing a name."

"Der baby show was good."

"Fust-class, an' more comin' all der time. Ain't goin' ter git up a nudder?"

"Not 'zactly. Yes, eer, dad, dis town's just hungry for sensations all der time."

"Dey got a 'markable appertite dat way, dat's fact. What of it?"

"What dey is got trough wid white baby shows, an' colored baby shows, an' cat shows, an' dog shows, an' bird shows—"

"Turn on der brake, yer givin' us too much show for der money."

"Well I's got an idea of a bran new ting; never done, an' sure ter make a hit."

"Dat's what yer chucked out afore. Give yer idea an' airin', mer son. Belch it, speel it, spit it out, give it ter mer. What's it all 'bout?"

"I'm tinkin' of gittin' up a goat show."

"Goat gracious."

"What der yer tink of it, dad?"

"Which, der goat? Tink he's a kicker."

"No; der scheme."

"Tink yer got it dead ter rights every time, kid. Goats order make a strong show."

"Yes, order make a show of der fust rank."

"Be a big tink fer der small boys, kid."

"Why?"

"'Cause dey kin pick up so many butts dere."

Finally he struck a quiet place where there were three or four men drinking. One of them from his general style and loud talk was evidently a cheap clerk in a retail store. He was telling about the house he boarded at for twenty dollars a week, and describing some of the meals he was daily furnished with.

While the kid was explaining to the bar-keeper about Shanks, and asking him if he had been in there, this clerk suddenly turned and spoke to him:

"Lookin' for a man?" he asked.

"Yes," answered Shorty Junior.

"Tall man?"

"Yes."

"Wears a plug hat?"

"Yes."

"Yankee, ain't he?"

"That's him."

"Kinder draws his words out long?"

"Dat's der party I's after. Has yer seen him?"

"Eh—ra—no," said the clerk, winking at his companions, "but if I do, I'll tell him you're lookin' for him."

The laugh was on the kid, but he took it kindly.

"Yer had me dat time by der short hair," he exclaimed with a smile. "I 'nowldges der corn. Der yer ever drink?"

"Drink! I should say so. Barkeeper, hists me out some of that forty cent brandy."

Chips watched him till he took the last swallow and then started to go out.

"I say," bawled the clerk after him, "yer wanten pay for this."

taker's shop, the proprietor of which he was well acquainted with.

"I'll play a racket on dat Yank dat'll make a temperance man of him agin, I'll bet three free passes ter der show," he muttered.

There was quite a party in the undertaker's, and Shorty Junior, after shaking hands, took the boss one side and talked to him.

"Correct," said the undertaker, whose name was Screws, "I'll do it."

After giving some general directions to the crowd, who were a jolly lot, and went at their work with many grins, he hitched up his horse, and he and the kid started after Shanks.

They lifted him gently into the wagon—he was too far gone to know he was being disturbed—and in twenty minutes had him in Screw's shop.

They laid him out on a long plank close by a hat store, and with an open coffin right beside him.

Having got him fixed to their satisfaction, the next thing to do was to get him awake enough to realize what was going on about him.

This the crowd succeeded in doing by holding a smelling-bottle to his nose and continually digging him in the ribs with their fists.

At length he opened his eyes and gazed stupidly around, seeing which the crowd at once became as solemn as if they were at a funeral.

The sight that met the astonished look of Shanks gave him such a shock that it partly sobered him—that is to say, his head became clear, but his limbs were as drunk as ever, so that he was helpless.

On one side of him stood a row of mournful-looking burial cases, while close to him a man worked industriously on the open coffin, fastening down the lining with little tacks, driven briskly home with a polished hammer.

All around him stood sad-looking men, some handling saws and long linen bandages, some conversing together in whispers, and some weeping.

"Where rammer? Wazzer matter?" he faintly murmured, quite terror-stricken.

"Mr. Coroner," said one man, appearing much agitated, "the corpse speaks."

"It's nothing, gentlemen," exclaimed a brisk little man coming into view. "I've known hundreds of cases of the kind before; quite common. He is dead I assure you, and we will now proceed with the inquest."

"Corpse? Cor'ner?" moaned Shanks. "Waz it mean?"

"Now gentleman," cried the little man, cheerfully, "let the jury sit on the body."

Four or five heavy men sat down on Shanks, and though he tried to struggle, it was a dismal failure, and he could only groan in dissent.

"Now, gentleman," continued the brisk little man, "the oath. You all solemnly swear, um, um, um, so help yer bob!"

"We do!" cried the jury.

"Ah! I think no formal inquest is necessary, but if you insist, I will cut him open of course."

A long, painful groan from Shanks.

"Ah!" went on the little man, "very well then. I think you are agreed on a verdict? Died with the—"

"Jim jams!" sang the crowd.

"That settles it. Now you can bury him at your leisure."

The jury got up off the body and began talking among themselves.

"Mournful case," said one.

"Very sad," answered another.

"Look here," roared Shanks, getting more and more sober. "Lemme up. I ain't dead by a darn sight. Wher's Shorty? Wher's the kid?"

"It's ner use, Shanks," said the last mentioned party, coming to his side, and wiping his eyes with a big handkerchief. "Might's well keep quiet, ol' man, yer dead's a door nail; yer may think yer 'live, but yer ain't. Yer've croaked."

"What th' devil you talking about?" yelled Shanks, trying to get up. "I'm as live as a cricket."

"Didn't yer hear all dese gentlemen say yer was dead? What's der good ev spiln' things? Here me an' dad's had a fust-class inquest set on yer, an' I've bought yer der boss wooden overcoat, an' ordered sixteen coaches fer yer plantin', an' sent all der way ter Philadelphia ter git some lines writ on yer:

They buried him in the cold, cold ground

While the weeping members of Shorty Junior's great American show stood round;

Put away his little bottle and his glass,

For he is dead, alas! Gone to meet his grandmother.

Now lie still an' be buried like a man. 'F yer gits out in der street yer'll be 'rested for a fraud, 'cause der coroner says yer *are* dead, an' dat settles it. Gentlemen, he dosen't know when he's well off. Put him in his little box an' screw on der cover, while I retires ter slobber mer tears in private."

The kid withdrew, and sitting on a stool, laughed till his sides ached as he thought of his racket and Shanks' woe-begone look.

The "corpse" was lifted up and would have been put in the coffin, but after a short struggle he managed to break away, and gaining the door, ran down the street as lively as he could go.

CHAPTER VI.

We left our little hero holding his sides, at Screws the undertaker.

"Much 'bliged ter yer gents," he said, when he got through with his laugh, "an' I hopes dis 'll cure my friend Shanks of wrasslin' wid der spirit to any future large extent. Pleased ter see yer all down at the show any time."

They promised to pay him a visit shortly, and the kid took his departure.

"Dat's putty jolly crowd," he thought to himself, as he hurried briskly along, "an' I tinks I orter cultivate der better 'quaintance. I'll see dem later. 'Specks after dat lively ol' shakin up Shanks is climbed rite home an' gone ter bed, an' dat's der best ting he kin do."

But here Shorty Junior was mistaken.

Shanks had not gone home. Far from it. When he got out of doors his mind was very much confused. The sight of the coffins, coroner and jury had made him very nervous, and at first he imagined he had been fooling with the jim-jams; but when he came to remember the presence of the kid, all was clear to him at once.

That settled it.

"One of his darn rackets, I'll bet all New England agin a turnip!" he muttered. "But there'll come a day of reck'nin', a sorter judgment day to him, if I have to lay awake a week thinking how to get square on the little cuss."

Feeling pretty shaky, he stopped and took a cocktail, and fearing that one would find it lonely, he took another. Then, as two might get fighting, he sent down a third as a sort of peacemaker, and a fourth and fifth as lookers on.

He was all right by this time, and made up his mind that if he could get a couple of hours' sleep, he would come forth clear-headed and blooming.

He went directly to the show, and not seeing Shorty Junior or his dad, crawled into a cage that had just been put up for a large animal, first telling one of the

hands not to disturb him till the people were all out of the place.

The back and sides of this cage were of wood, and the front was made of strong iron bars about four inches apart. A cloth had been thrown over the front, so that the interior was entirely hid from view.

"Don't forget to wake me up, boy," he said, as he climbed in, and, making a pillow of a blanket, he was soon in the happy land of dreams.

The kid arrived shortly after this, and the first thing he did was to ask for Shanks.

Fortunately, or unfortunately, he struck the only party who knew where the Yankees really was—the man he had told to wake him up.

"Seen Mr. Shanks dis evenin'?"

The man pointed towards the cage and said, "Yes, sir. He's sound asleep in dere."

"Dat so?" exclaimed the kid. "Let him sleep. Best ting he kin do; an' don't let him be boddered."

Shorty Junior left and took a look through the building to see that everything was going on straight, a duty he never neglected; for though he was full of fun and would go any length to have his racket, he always attended to business.

The house was rapidly filling up, and the kid's attention was attracted by a laughing crowd that surrounded the Rev. W. Cheesit Guppy and his learned pig Pete.

He worked his way in among the people to see what was going on.

The Rev. W. Cheesit Guppy had evidently been at it again. That is to say, Guppy had been lubricating, passing the afternoon with Bacchus, the god of unsteady legs, whose disciples generally awake from their worship to hear those doleful words, "Ten days or ten dollars"—he had been waltzing with the rosy, fluid hiding—in fact, Guppy had been taking in beer, etc.; and etc. covers a multitude of drinks.

Pete, or Fly Pete as he was generally called, was pretty far gone also, for he was as fond of beer as his master, and occasionally he came in for a liberal share.

"Now, then, ladies and gentlemen," began Guppy, pulling up his collar and waving his long arms as if he intended to convert every sinner in the show in just three minutes. "I will introduce to you, Pete, the learned pig. His last name may be Napoleon, or it may be George Washington, or, or—it may not. I promised his mother on her dying bed to, to—Pete, behave yourself."

Whenever Guppy was a little "full," and got stuck for an idea he invariably reproved the pig.

"The pig," he continued, in a burst of confidence, "is an, er—an animal."

This solid chunk of information didn't startle his hearers for a cent.

"An animal of brains, and, and—and enormous appetite. In the rugged wilds of the west, where the giant cataract cleaves its mighty way to, to, ah, to—Pete, be quiet. In the west he eats corn and acorns, trees, fences, prairies, and eh, and eh—Pete, must I speak to you again? He is capable of the grandest development. To solve a problem in Euclid is, as I may say—a big thing. Print it on green leaves and the pig will solve, or dissolve, a whole geometry at one, ah, ah, eh—Pete?—never mind, it's all right—meal! The pig can be made a great pet of; has been for ages the pet of sages, and, er, —sausages, as I may say."

Suddenly realizing that he had made a joke, he came to a full stop, looked at Pete as if that tricky animal had just committed some hideous crime, coughed, and went on again.

"Excuse me," he said. "In the bright lexicon of youth there's no such word as, eh—sausage. Partly Bulwer, partly my own. The pig comes floating down the pathway of time from a—former generation—in fact, from a very former generation. The first pig ever mentioned, if I remember rightly, is Pygmalion, a gentleman who hacked marble, and—and—eh—Pete behave!"

Guppy evidently hadn't the remotest idea of what he was saying, or why he was saying it.

"Having," he continued, with the confident air of a man who has been imparting valuable information, "having now given you a minute history of the pig from creation down to the present hour, I will, as it were, put Pete through a course of sprouts."

"You'd scarce expect one of his age—only two. To appear in public on the stage."

"Entirely original; thrown off on the spur of the moment."

Guppy then called on Pete to go through his performances, at the same time keeping up a running fire of remarks.

He made the pig at word of command, shake hands, lie down, turn over, go lame, stand up and walk on his hind legs, jump through hoops, and do a dozen other tricks to the great delight of the crowd.

Pete, considering his lusher condition, made few mistakes, and being a very well trained animal indeed, gave immense satisfaction; and excepting an occasional grunt of disapprobation at the entire proceedings, was as good as any pig—slightly "how come you so?"—could be expected to be.

While he was doing his act, a well dressed man stepped up to a couple of rural looking people, evidently lovers, and thus addressed the female:

"Why Sarah Smith, how do you do?"

"Guess you'r mistaken in the pusson," replied the woman, who was sharp featured, vinegary looking, and crowding forty. "My name ain't Sary Smith; it's plain Alice Grizzle, from Squeersville, Long Island."

"Beg ten thousand pardons," said the man, with a bow, and withdrew.

"Now then, ladies and gentlemen," cried Guppy, bringing out a pack of cards and scattering them about the platform; "Pete will tell the fortune of any lady who will step forward. He has the sacred gift of second sight which enables him to gaze into the dim, uncertain future; to penetrate the dark, unfathomable

career of—of—eh—of—now then, Pete, are you quite ready?"

The pig grunted, and began pawing the cards.

"Now then, will some lady please come forward, and—eh—and let my little friend draw aside the black curtain of futurity, and reveal the—the—the—eh—that'll do, Pete. Can I prevail upon you, madam?"—addressing the party the well-dressed man had mistaken for another.

"Law me, I dunno," giggled the woman. "Shall I, Ike?" she asked of her companion.

"Yeas; go in jist fer fun."

"All right, mister," she said to Guppy, blushing like a rose of several summers ago. "Les see what yer pig kin do."

"Now, then, Pete," cried Guppy, pushing out a lot of blocks with letters and figures on them. "Let us begin. Firstly, what is the lady's name?"

Pete was sobering up and beginning to get ugly. He required to be touched up several times, at which he grunted angrily, but finally managed to spell out with the blocks, A-L-I-C-E.

"That; right?" asked Guppy with a bland smile.

"Kerriect!" answered the woman, all amazement.

"How kin he tell?"

"Go on, Peter," said Guppy.

When the pig at length spelled out, Grizzle, Squeersville, L. I.

"Well, if that don't beat all!" exclaimed the woman, with her eyes sticking out of her head. "It's truly wonderful!"

"Now, Peter, be careful. Is this lady married?"

The pig looked over the cards and then spelled out widow.

"Kerrect agin!" cried the woman, lost in wonderment.

"How many husbands has she had, Pete?"

The pig promptly showed out the figure nine.

"Good Gor!" groaned the man with the woman.

"How many children?" continued Guppy, who was getting further and further gone in the head, and hadn't any clear idea of what the pig was doing.

Out came the number 64.

"Correct, madam?" asked Guppy as innocent as a lamb.

The look on the woman's face changed from wonder to anger and she grew red and white by turns. Grasping her umbrella tightly and with fire flashing from her eye, she yelled:

"You miserable old drunken sinner yer, how dare yer? You an' th' tother hog is both villains! Nine husbands an' sixty-four children, indeed! an' me only married once. Ike, be you goin' ter stan' by and see me insulted? Let me at that ol' fraud! 'I'll give him nine chil'ron an' sixty-four husbands!"

She sprang to the platform and gave the Reverend Guppy a wang over the head that sent him spinning out among the people. Then she made another clip at him with her umbrella, but missing her aim struck a fat man and knocked him down. He sprang to his feet and striking out wildly, hit the female's companion, and bounced him over against a cage of chattering monkeys, who at once seized the unfortunate wretch by the hair and held him fast.

By this time the said to be much married female had got hold of an innocent looker on whom she mistook for Guppy, and was wearing out her umbrella on him fast. Every time she raised her weapon to strike she hit her companion across the face, which made him howl with rage, and the monkeys pull all the harder at his hair.

And Pete, the pig, and Shorty Junior, were the only ones in the crowd that seemed to thoroughly enjoy the commotion.

The slandered female was appeased at length, and her escort relieved, minus considerable hair.

Swearing all sorts of vengeance they passed in arm and arm to see the play, and were heard of no more.

Had the woman stopped a moment and thought of the young man who had mistaken her for another, the mystery of the pig's correct answer to some of the questions asked would have been very plain.

Shorty Junior hunted up the defeated Guppy, and found that celebrated lecturer bathing his damaged eye with cold water, and regaling his stomach with old Tom gin.

He reproved him for his conduct and told him that in future he must be more careful.

"Alas!" said Guppy, "the woes of humanity are many, and pleasure is a flattering goddess that keeps just beyond our grasp. Now you see it and now you don't, Mr. Kid. Truth, who is a distant relative of mine—

"Distance lends enchantment to—to things—Shakespeare—compels me to state that the violent female is drunk."

"When other lips and other-er-hearts

Their tales of love shall tell,

I'll bet an eighteen penny tart

My eye is going to swell!"

"Slightly altered from Moore. Long meter."

"Well look here, mer bloomin' poet," replied the kid; with a grin, "yer keep 'round an' stay sober; 'cause I'll want yer soon fer ter do some tall talkin' 'bout a new animal I've jist got in. Brush up yer knowledge on monkeys, an' be ready fer me."

Guppy promised to do as required, and Shorty Junior went off to his dad.

"Dat temperance lecturer of ours 'is a rattler," he said to him. "Jist had a racket wid an ol' woman dat'd done yer good ter gaze at."

"Cheese der rackets!" answered his dad. "Is yer found Shanks yit?"

"Oh, he's all rite. He's soun' 'sleep an' snorin' like a bull. How does der receipts pan out ter nite?"

"Hundred bushels ter der acre every time. Don't see wher all der folks come from."

"Dat's der way I likes ter see der business, gittin' up

and gittin' all der time. Guess 'll go in an' see how der play is runnin'."

He found the pantomime going finely, and the audience roaring over the comic tricks of the thin clown, and the misfortunes of the tall pantaloon.

Nothing unusual occurred until the play was over. Then the people filed out and began examining the various curiosities.

In the meantime Shorty Junior had hunted up the Reverend Mr. Guppy and given him his instructions.

That gentleman, now somewhat straightened up, his clothes rearranged and his black eye painted, was in his glory.

He led the visitors from one thing to another, explaining, answering questions, quoting home-made poetry—in fact, keeping his tongue going like a mill race.

"Here ladies and gentlemen," he exclaimed, sweeping his arm towards some twenty different weapons, "is the original sword worn by General George Washington at the battle of Bunker Hill."

"Which one is it?"

"You pays your money and you take your choice—

Wave the good old blade on high,
Shout right out the battle-cry—

From a poem by myself shortly to be written."

living curiosities, the only real live specimen of the great untamed boomerang African gorilla from Timbuctoo.

"He stands eight feet high, and weighs three hundred and fifty pounds. His food is raw beef and he devours a whole ox daily:

'His limbs are strong, his eyes are bright,

And awful is his appetite.'

"Received from Africa with the gorilla. He breaks with his teeth the strongest iron bars and has an autograph letter from the proprietor of the Timbuctoo gymnasium, saying he is the most powerful—"

Here a chorus of voices interrupted him.

"Up wid der rag!"

"Tear down the curtain!"

"Show up der ol' goril!"

"Ah, excuse me," exclaimed Guppy. "I did not know that the monster was hidden from view."

He turned and pulled away the cloth that covered the front of the cage:

And there stood Shanks!

He had just woke up but fully realized his awful situation. He turned pale with rage and glared straight at the kid, who was howling himself hoarse with merriment.

The crowd dropped to the racket at once, and Guppy's further remarks were drowned amidst a storm of shouts, yells and laughter.

colors—in fact, such a conglomeration and varied mass of goats were never before collected together.

And every goat was a fighter from the word go.

Each new comer that was introduced was promptly challenged on the spot by every other goat in the hall, and if he was at all enterprising and desirous of keeping up the dignity of his race, in ten minutes he found that he had made engagements to do battle with several hundred of his kind, and was led away to his allotted place with the pleasant prospect of being kept continually in a hot row for the balance of his life.

From the moment the first two goats were brought in, the trouble began, and the fighting never ceased till the last one was taken out.

They were a warlike race, and deemed it no particular trouble to butt down a wooden partition to get at a neighbor and take a friendly fall out of him.

The owners were even worse than the goats themselves, and quarreled incessantly.

What with the bleating, the butting, and tumbling about of the goats, the aroma, the yells of the immense crowd of spectators, the growls and personal encounters of the owners, the show became a perfect pandemonium, and to say that Shorty Junior was on his ear, but faintly expresses his condition.

He never had a moment to himself, and right glad was he when the thing ended.



It was too good an opportunity for his billy to miss; and it gave its master a vicious dig in the back that sent him a flying.

"But Washington wasn't at that battle," shouted a small boy.

"Correct, young man. He was detained at the mournful bedside of his dying aunt.

Fell Death's untimely frost,
That nipped his aunt so early—

Balance forgotten. This is the sword he would have worn if he had been there. Here we see Napoleon's golden crown valued at twenty-five thousand dollars. He always wore this night and day, which may account for his distressing baldness."

'Napoleon, he was a screamer,
And he died at St. Helena.

Anonymous."

And so he went on till he reached the cage wherein slumbered Shanks.

Shorty Junior had secured a good place right in front, and looked like an immense broad grin carrying around a very small man.

"And now then, ladies and gentlemen," shouted Guppy, with one hand pointing to the cage, "having shown you the numerous curiosities which have been exhibited before all the crowned heads of Europe, Asia, and Africa—to say nothing of the deadheads, having pointed out to you the celebrated sacred cow of India with a living snake in her eye, and also the equally celebrated fat man, who, occasionally has snakes in his boots—the colored lady with two heads, a double voice and a triple appetite—she only draws a single salary, however—we now come to the greatest of all

Shanks damning everybody wildly, shook his fists at the convulsed multitude and danced up and down, and howled in accents fully as terrible as any native gorilla himself could have done in his palmiest days.

The crowd would have stood there and jeered at him all night had not Shorty—who had been as much amused as anybody—taken pity on the Yankee and let him out of the back end of the cage.

He soon got him away from the crowd, and the two started for home; but not till Shanks had made a solemn vow to get hunk on the kid, if it took every cent he had, and the balance of his life.

And Shorty Junior deeming it prudent to keep out of the way, avoided Shanks all the next day.

He had no time to waste, for the preparations for his great goat show kept him busy from morning till night.

All sorts of goats began to arrive from all sorts of queer places. Battle Row, Dutch Hills, Tin Pot Alley, Love Lane, and a score of other well-known localities were represented in force, and it took all of Chips' time to get their goatships numbered, and in their proper place.

Every variety of goat appeared. Angora goats, Assyrian goats, goats with long, bushy tails, and goats with none at all; blue goats and red goats, black and tan goats, who seemed anxious to get right to work and black and tan every other goat in the building. Juda goats, three-legged goats, one blind goat, goats with horns growing all round their heads and down their backs, big and little, fat and lean, all sorts of

A clamorous crowd of exhibitors surrounded him wherever he went.

"Luck it, mister, why d' yer rammed me goat in er place where ould Nick himself wudden foind him?"

"I say, boss, McGolan's goat do be rappin' th' stuffin' outer mine, an' ef he ain't tuk away I'll have th' life of him."

"Who's beisness vas it dat I finds your fat man vas set down on mine goat vonst?"

"Whin do we git th' pramiuns?"

And then about forty would begin yelling and shaking their fists all at once.

"It's meself 'll git th' fust prize."

"I'll have it or I'll foight!"

"Go down yer ould sore-eyed goats! 'Lave me th' fust pramiun, or I'll have yer tuck up f'r er swindler."

And so it went on from morning until night.

Peculiarly the show was a success, and our friend Guppy came out strong. He told more about goats in his lecture than Buffen ever dreamed of.

"This animal, ladies and gentlemen," he would exclaim, "is calculated for a life of—ah, wild freedom. It does not easily submit to confinement, but I am about on the borders of civilization, seeking to devour. It has few ifs and many buts.

"He wears a hairy overcoat,
Does this festive William Goat—

from an unpublished clothing advertisement. The milk is sweet and nourishing, and for use in puddings.

cannot be surpassed. It is—ah—very easily kept. A few sheets of brown paper, an old doormat or two, and half a dozen circus posters will be ample to feed a flock on all winter."

He would seldom get further than this before he would be asked a dozen different questions which he would answer in his own way; and if he failed to give much information he at least kept the crowd in a high state of good humor.

Mrs. McGorrotty was exhibiting a prize goat and two kids, and her neighbor was a German who owned a big savage billy, the worst animal in the show.

These two people were always wrangling, and on the third day they had a regular battle, and the fair McGorrotty retired from the field with a black eye.

The German stood grinning in triumph, when the McGorrotty, as mad as a March hare, seized one of her kids and hurled it at his head.

The flying animal struck him in the face, and with a howl of anguish he tumbled over.

It was too good an opportunity for his billy to miss; and he gave his master a vicious dig in the back that sent him flying.

A tall man just at that moment stooped to examine a very pretty little Nanny, and as he offered a tempting mark that no well regulated goat would pass, he was suddenly treated exactly as the German had been.

They came together with a crash.

"Who the deuce you kickin'?" sternly asked the tall man. "Vat for you knock me down vonst?" fiercely demanded the German.

They clinched in a moment, and began pounding each other wildly.

They got down on the floor and before they could be separated, a dozen goats, without the slightest partiality, began butting them hot and heavy.

They were finally rescued, and left looking as if they had been through the whole Turkish war.

With heartfelt thanks, Shorty Junior saw the last day of the show roll round. With a thousand and one annoyances he hadn't been himself for a week, and he vowed never to be caught in such a snap again.

The premiums were given out amidst a perfect hurricane of growls, but as most everybody got something, good humor was speedily restored.

The prizes were given in the lecture-room, and as Shorty Junior was about quitting the stage, glad that the thing was nearly over, he was stopped by Shanks and the Reverend Mr. Guppy, the latter carrying in his hand a handsome box.

Everybody in the place—and it was jammed—was at once on the tiptoe of excitement to know what was coming.

"Sir," said Shanks, addressing Shorty Junior; "I and Mr. Guppy have been appointed a committee of two to present to you a slight token of esteem gotten up by some of the exhibitors and all of the employees of this establishment."

He retired with a bow; and Chips began to feel good for the first time since the advent of the goats.

"Now dis somethin' like," he thought. "Dey does 'preciate me after all. I guess it's a watch."

Then Guppy came to the front.

"Ahem," began he. "Words fail to express, language cannot impart, the state of my—ah—feelings at this moment. I hold in my hand a box, the contents of which I have as yet not been introduced to, as I may say. But as it is a free offering from—ah—those who told you dear, allow me to hope, sir, that when you wear it, you will think of—ah—me."

Here he handed over the box which Shorty Junior, grinning with pleasure, secured and quickly opened.

First there was a paper and on it these words:

"To the best, the kindest, the most popular Kid in the whole goat show."

"Dat s'ist red hot," he muttered, after reading it.

And then he went down in the box again and brought out—a large leather medal.

The shout of laughter that went up from the vast audience shook the building.

To tell the truth the kid was disappointed; but he had to grin in spite of himself; and when he saw Shanks and his dad standing at one of the wings howling with joy, he knew who had put the job up on him.

"All rite," he shouted, shaking his leather present, "ye'll find out dat dis isn't der sort of kid ter meddle wid."

And they did.

CHAPTER VII.

SHORTY JUNIOR quitted the platform, and thrusting the medal in his pocket, went off to get hunk immediately.

He called four or five of the hands about the place, and going to that part of the building where the goats reigned supreme, he directed that every one of them be untied.

This was soon accomplished, and then began a scene that beggars description.

When first released the goats stood quite still, as if they could hardly believe that the one darling wish of their hearts was really gratified.

As every goat there had a solemn engagement to fight every other goat, they seemed undetermined where to begin.

The German's big billy opened the ball by knocking a much smaller animal clean off his pins with one blow.

And in a moment the row became general.

Such an awful din! Such a roaring, battling, butting mass of excited goats, such rushes, such tumbling over, such entanglements, was surely never thought of before by the oldest and most warlike goat in the world.

It was a perfect picnic to them; a foretaste of the goat heaven; a sublime battle, brilliant accounts of

which will undoubtedly be handed down from one generation of goats to another.

The noise was terrific and the air was full of flying goat.

They would rear up on their hind legs, and cocking their heads one side as if taking perfect aim, would come together with a wild rush that ought to have dislocated their backbones.

Some were licking, some on their backs, some bleeding, many half blinded, but every individual goat full of fight and no doubt only dreading that too quick an end should be put to their pleasures.

Every goat was mad all the way through, from the tip of his tail to the end of his horns, and it looked as if each one had made up his mind never to quit the field while a single antagonist remained alive.

The owners were all in the lecture-room where the animals were first untied, but when the battle began they hurried to the scene as quickly as possible.

The crowd followed of course and commenced howling, hooting, and cheering on the combatants, like a lot of demons broke loose.

"I'll bet ten dollars on the big white!"

"Go 't Dutch Hills, knock 'em cold!"

"Git up, redney, an' give him another for th' honor of Tin Pot Alley!"

"Call th' police!"

"Anchor a man of war off Wall Street!"

"Chuck in er circus poster an' see 'im go fer it!"

The goats paid no attention to anybody, but went right on attending strictly to business, and fought in the most desperate and determined manner.

The kid was on hand when the owners came up and with a malicious grin he shouted to them:

"Yer fellers were extra kind to chuck dis leader medal at me an' I 'preciates ter action highly. I can't treat yer all ter a drink, but every mother's son of you go right in an' take a horn."

"Dis show's over, der's yer goats, please remove 'em at once."

"Who makes mine goat tied loose?" howled the German.

"Somebody dat tort he looked ter tidy," answered the kid.

Amidst a storm of laughter, the German rushed in among the clashing animals and grabbing his big billy by his fighting end, attempted to drag him out.

The goats resented this interference in a body.

Twenty of them at least went for that representative of Berlin, and began a violent assault on as many different parts of his body.

He roared with pain, and when he got away he looked as if he had been spending an evening with a family of buzz saws.

A lot of exhibitors sailed at the goats in a body, and tried to drag their favorites off. And then the din was redoubled. Men howled, raved, swore and tugged at their property, kicking and striking right and left, but the goats rallied finely, and drove the would be captors from the field, while the crowd laughed, hooted and applauded.

The only way the battling mass was got out was by grabbing those on the outskirts by the hind legs and dragging them from the building.

They were all finally removed, excepting the German's big billy, who was unanimously declared to be the boss goat, and purchased on the spot by the kid, to add to his other curiosities.

As soon as the last exhibitor disappeared, all traces of the goat show were swept away, and never before in his life was the kid so glad to get out of any scrape as he was out of this.

"Tell yer what, dad," said he on the road home, "nudder day of dat would a made a howlin' lunatic out of yours truly, sure's a gun."

"Didn't dey go it?" exclaimed Shorty.

"Yes, Nanny go it," observed Chips with a grin.

"How 'bout dat medal?"

"Don't chuck remarks 'bout dat; leather alone. I owe Shanks one fer dat bounce."

"If he'd had it made out of tin it might have panned out better," coddled his dad.

"Oh, 'f it had been lead it would 'er led ter same ter der same results," answered the kid good humoredly.

"Yes, but it wasn't lead—it was leather."

"Sole leader ter, by der way I was sol' on it," laughed Shorty Junior. "I say, dad, dat big goat I bought is a tearer."

"I tink he's a ripper."

"Dat joke's on'y kinder s'w sew."

"Seems radder weak, dat's fact."

"Don't be ser funny; ye'll give mer a stitch in mer side lafin. Every time dat billy hit nudder goat he knocked him billyous."

"Bet he give a good many of 'em der rheumatics," said Shorty.

"'F dat's so, dey better put 'em in attic rooms till dey gits cured," punned the kid.

And so they had it back and forth until they reached the hotel, where, as Shorty Junior observed, "er hearty flow of vittals stopped der flow of wit."

Shorty Junior was simply another name for Enterprize. Every day he added some new attraction to his show, and certainly no visitor could go away complaining that he had not had his money's worth.

He was justified in his large outlays, for the public extended to him a generous support and his bank account was getting big enough to make one's eyes glisten.

He spared neither pains nor expense, and justly boasted that he owned the boss show of the United States.

After the pantomime had had its run, he started a new lay out, which he called:

"Shorty Junior's Mammoth American Minstrels."

His troupe was a curiosity, and took the town by storm.

One of the end men was Mr. Stoutlad, the living skeleton, and whenever he was addressed as "Bones," it invariably brought down the house.

At the other end, with the tamborine, sat Mr. Buster, that gentle youth who played the harlequin, and who scaled about seven hundred pounds.

And when they were blacked up it was hard to tell which was the most comical-looking, he or Bones.

The giant was the middle man, and the balance of the company, excepting the singers and musicians, consisted of the tall woman, fat females, who had figured in the ballet, and dwarfs.

It was an odd collection, and when it is added that old man Shorty—who was formerly in the minstrel business—himself appeared, it can be readily imagined that the house was crowded nightly.

The performance consisted of a parlor entertainment, followed by songs, dances, sketches, and a farce.

Shorty Jr. supplied the jokes, which were fresh, crisp, and pat to the times, while his dad took charge of the stage management, and on his very first appearance, renewed his former triumphs.

Stoutlad, who though he was little more than an animated bone, was as healthy and frisky as a colt, did the "Essence of ol' Virginny," and his odd looks and queer contortions, were pronounced by both press and public to be the funniest thing ever seen.

Both he and Mr. Buster, the fat man, sang comic songs in the opening, and their voices were as opposite as could be; Stoutlad's being a deep rich bass that seemed to come from somewhere away down stairs, while Buster owned a light falsetto that would have disgraced a lad of ten.

The sentimental songs and choruses were well sung, the sketches lively, the actors droll from their very looks, and the venture a success from the first.

And it afforded the kid a perfect harvest of fun, and rackets by the dozens.

Buster, on account of his enormous size, had to have a chair made to order to sit in.

This Shorty, Jr., managed to have hidden away one night, and substituted in its stead an ordinary arm-chair.

Buster didn't notice the change until the curtain had rolled up, and then he was in a dilemma. He couldn't get more than a quarter of himself in this chair at once, and as he could not sit down in sections, he looked the picture of despair, gazed at the audience, then at himself, and then at his seat.

This set the people laughing at him, and made him mad. He threw the thing away, and called for something he could sit in.

And a super brought him two ordinary wooden chairs.

As he was about to plant himself, the kid, who had a stout string fastened to one of them, pulled it away, and Buster sat down on the stage with a crash that shook the house, and immediately had a free exhibition of a million stars, more or less.

"Yer dropped somethin'!" sang out a small boy.

"Git er broom an' sweep him up!"

"Send fer der floatin' dock an' histe him!"

Being as helpless as a child when once down, they had to assist him to his feet, while everybody laughed and applauded.

Another amusement of the kid's was to put bent pins on his chair, and when he sat down he invariably got right up with a howl, and rubbed himself as if he wasn't sure whether he was all there or not.

He always on these occasions complained to Shorty Junior, that some darned rascal was sticking things in him; a grievance that the kid listened to with a grave face and a promise to discharge the offender when caught at his tricks, at a moment's notice.

One night Buster and Stoutlad were playing a sketch, in which, while the former was singing a song, the latter clubbed him vigorously.

It is an old business, and never fails to raise a hearty laugh.

While one man clubs the other as hard as he can, the party that is receiving the punishment goes right on singing as if he was entirely alone; and on discovering that he is not, he coolly turns around and shakes hands with the clubber as if nothing out of the way had happened.

On this particular occasion Chips had inserted in the club used a small, sharp brad.

Stoutlad knew nothing about this, and the clubbing began as usual.

At first all was well; but suddenly, the club having got turned again, the brad drove into Buster's tender flesh.

The song instantly ceased, he gave a yell like a Hot-tentot, bounded half a dozen feet straight up into the air and came down in the orchestra, smashing a piano and upsetting four or five musicians.

Women screamed, men howled, and the whole house was in an uproar.

More dead than alive he was assisted to the stage, and if at that moment he could have got his hands on the innocent Stoutlad, he would have torn off his bones what little meat he owned.

Just after the matinee on the day following Shorty Junior had both Buster and Stoutlad arrested.

He had put up a job on them with a couple of the undertaker's gang, who sailed in just at the close of the performance, and seizing their victims by the arms, said:

"You are wanted. Come with us."

"Good gorr!" gasped Buster, getting down to the color of a sheet with surprising rapidity.

"What for?" nervously asked Stoutlad, in a terrified voice.

"We have discovered the whole base plot," replied the frisky little man who had acted the part of coroner when they had tried to convince Shanks that he was dead, and whose name, by the way, was Corker. "Ain't we, partner?"

"Know it all," replied the other, solemnly.

"Yes, but what—is it? What have—we done?"

Anxiously inquired Buster, who had to stop and

take in a fresh cargo of breath at every two words or so.

"Attempted murder," said Corker, cheerfully. The fat man and lean one groaned dismally, and looked at each other ruefully.

"You entered into a diabolical conspiracy to deprive a couple of musicians of their lives and weekly salaries, because they could not keep the proper time while you were dancing. In a public performance you, Mr. Buster, assisted by you, Mr. Stoutlad—don't start, we know you both—sprang into the orchestra with a mighty bound and the awful intention of crushing those two unoffending, unfortunate musicians to death. We have all the evidence, haven't we, partner?"

"Evidence all in," answered his chum, with a profound sigh, as if he thought it would go hard with the malefactor.

"Why it's a—mistake, gentlemen," began Buster. "I will explain—"

"Yes; to a judge and jury," interrupted Corker. "What is your authority? Who are you?" asked Stoutlad, timidly.

"I am Slouch the detective!" cried Corker. "An' I'm another!" added his pal.

Had the two victims not been so thoroughly frightened they might have seen that the whole thing was a farce; but, as it was, fear got the better of judgment,

The crowd kept increasing until the street was almost impassable, and as everybody was laughing, shouting and geying, had the ground opened and swallowed the "curiosities" up they would have deemed it a special favor.

While stage drivers pulled up and politely invited them to "ride up," while newsboys insisted on supplying them with "der latest edishing," and bootblack offered to shine "der trunks," Mr. Corker and his companion remained solemn and grim and marched straight ahead towards the park.

Finally the police came in force and endeavored to disperse the multitude; and in the confusion the two "detectives" sloped, leaving the victims of Shorty Junior's joke to look out for themselves.

Finding that they were free, Buster and Stoutlad dove into the nearest barroom to escape the crowd.

And several habitual "setters" in the place evidently made up their minds on the spot that when they began to see such things as that they must "have 'em on 'em bad," immediately got up and went out looking as if they had determined to swear off at once.

"For gor sake," gasped Buster, who hardly knew whether he was on his heels or his head, "git us—coach."

"Coach!" answered the barkeeper, viewing his immense proportions, "you couldn't git inside no coach

favorite with them his was the best and oftenest noticed show in town.

But it was the outsiders, the hangers on of the grand army of deadheads, the people who hadn't the slightest claim to free admission, and who could neither do him any harm nor any good, that bothered him morning, noon and night.

They would represent themselves as professionals, sword swallowers, knife heavers and all sorts of things, or else they would come from some out of town paper like the *Grubville Weekly Delight* or the *Hunkdown Morning Slasher*, and insist on taking themselves, friends and families right inside.

They would lay for him on the stairway of the hotel the first thing in the morning as he was descending to breakfast, buttonhole him in the street when he was in a desperate hurry to keep some important engagement, light on him at the dinner table, and even when he retired for the night the last thing he would get would be a pile of letters soliciting free tickets.

The applicants were mostly frauds of the deepest dye and they kept him on his ear more than half the time.

He got so that he could spot a deadhead a mile off.

One fellow bored him persistently, and he put up a job on him as a warning to his fellow beats.

He was a long, seedy-looking chap, and his greasy



He gave a yell, bounded half a dozen feet straight up into the air, and came down in the orchestra.

and they thought only of getting out of the scrape as speedily as possible.

They wanted to call the musicians themselves—wanted to send for Shorty Junior, who was concealed close at hand and enjoying the scene hugely—but the detectives firmly refused to listen to any suggestions, and spite of protests marched them off with their stage clothes still on and their faces blackened.

Once in the street, they created a profound sensation.

Stoutlad was arrayed in a high white hat, a gray blanket overcoat, and a pair of brogans at least five times too big for his feet.

Buster's rig was light and airy. He wore white pantaloons much too short for him, and held up by one suspender, a straw hat, and a dirty hickory shirt.

The detectives marched them straight down Broadway.

And in five minutes they were being followed by at least a thousand people, including the grinning kid, his dad and Shanks.

Men, women and children came swarming from every direction to see what the matter was, and one glance at the two sad looking "curiosities" set them all in a roar.

"Who are they?" was the general question, and the answers in most cases didn't jostle truth for a cent.

"It's Buffalo Bill!"

"Who's de odder buffer?"

"Slim Jim, der boss terror of Gooley's gulch!"

"It's King Halleluger from the Sandwich Islands!"

"Dey is er couple er escaped Southern congressmen."

in this town 'less they took th' roof off. I'd better send for the Black Maria."

"Send for anything so long as we can get back where we belong," pleaded Stoutlad.

At this moment the kid entered the place and expressed great surprise at finding two of his people in such a predicament and in such dresses and color.

He played his part so well that they never for a moment suspected that he had been the cause of all their woes, and in the innocence of their hearts explained to him how they had been dragged off and mobbed.

He pretended to be very angry and declared that if the perpetrator of this shameless hoax were ever discovered, that they should suffer the extreme penalty of the law if it cost a fortune.

He sent for a two horse open express wagon and followed by a howling mob, Buster and Stoutlad were quickly driven back to the show.

The balance of the company had a big thing on them, and they didn't hear the last of Slouch, the detective, for a long time.

Happiness didn't eternally smile on Shorty Junior, and promenade with him arm and arm all the time by any manner of means.

He had his troubles as well as the rest of us. And his principal affliction was—Deadheads.

They came at him in all sorts of ways, in all manner of disguises, and at all sorts of times.

Of course the regular members of the press were always heartily welcome, and as the kid was a universal

card informed the unfortunate people that came in contact with him that his name was P. Leg Potter.

His custom was to bustle in as if bent on most important business, corner Shorty Junior, and strike him for passes.

The kid resolved to let this man in badly.

"My dear boy," said Potter one day, having Chips cornered as usual, "I am from Bourbonville, this state, and shall probably be in town for several weeks."

The kid replied that he was sorry, and thought to himself that if the festive Potter did stay in town several weeks, he would be quite likely to spend the most of his time in a public building in Centre Street known to the world as the Tombs.

"My dear boy," continued Potter, with as free and easy air, "I represent the *Bourbonville Glare of Light*. Know Bourbonville, this state?"

The kid said he did not, which was a great relief to Potter who was entirely unacquainted with the place himself, and which in reality only existed in his own brilliant imagination.

"As it is a place of some fifteen thousand inhabitants great theater-goers, and I am proud to say that the *Glare of Light*, circulation thirty thousand, is, as I may put it, the literary provision-house to which flocks all that part of the country for its, so to speak, brain food. If you contemplate traveling you must not fail to go to Bourbonville, and to be successful in that thriving town it is only necessary to know—me."

"If ever travels dis show," exclaimed the kid, pretending to be deeply interested, "I'll scoop in dat town sure pop."

"Thank you, thank you. If you could permit me to your great exhibition for a few moments—"

"Wid pleasure," broke in the kid.

"You are very kind. Bourbonville shall hear of this generosity, I assure you. If it is not against your rule, a season ticket given to me—"

"Jist what I was going to propose," said Chips.

"As, my dear boy," and Potter's eyes glistened with joy, for he thought he had struck a soft thing, "I shall write a long description of your show for the *Glare of Light* this very day, and at a word from me, when you go to Bourbonville, twenty thousand people, sir, twenty thousand, will welcome you with open arms."

And he went right on to strike while the iron was hot.

"I wish to ask a trifling favor, and if it is at all inconvenient to you to grant it, I pray you do not hesitate through fear of wounding my delicate feelings to let me know at once. Of course by my notice I can throw a great deal of money in your way. My remittance this week has not yet arrived from my paper, and if you could accommodate me with a small loan, say—"

and here he halted for a moment to think about how high it would be safe to go, "say, forty dollars for a day or two—"

"Wid pleasure," interrupted the kid. "Don't mention it. Walk in an' look at der show; an' when we come out der cashier 'll be here, an' I'll git yer der season ticket an' der money."

They went inside, and for a moment Potter felt a pang of regret.

He was sorry he hadn't made it fifty.

The kid, beginning on the lower floor, took him all through the building, explained everything, introduced him to everybody, and did his best to entertain him.

Potter pretended to be greatly pleased and praised everything to the skies.

When they got to the top floor the kid proposed going up on the roof where, he said, could be had a magnificent view of the city from the Battery to Harlem.

Potter went up the steps first, Shorty Junior following on behind, his face now on a broad grin.

When the *Glare of Light* representative stepped out on the roof, the kid, who was still inside, quickly closed the scuttle, locked it, put the key in his pocket, and with a highly satisfied air walked down stairs.

"I'll let dat darn fraud loaf up dere till he freezes himself ter a chunk of ice," he muttered.

It was a piercing cold day, the wind blew a gale and Potter's teeth began to chatter.

He at once recognized the fact that he had been badly sold and was the maddest and coldest man in the country. He vainly called for aid, tried to pry open the scuttle and shivered and shook as if had the ague.

He danced up and down with rage and swore like a trooper. When almost dead with cold, he espied a ladder leading down to the roof of the house next door. He quickly descended this and soon got into the building.

He thought he was safe, but alas! he met a woman in the upper hall who mistook him for a burglar.

She yelled with fright, and her husband rushing out seized the unfortunate deadhead, and after giving him a terrible beating handed him over to the police.

The last the kid saw of him, was marching off, all bloody and battered, in the hands of an officer.

"He'll git a free ticket now, I'll bet a dollar," grinned Chips.

Mr. Potter never turned up again and the balance of the deadheads, knowing his fate, kept religiously away.

CHAPTER VIII.

The day after the kid's racket with Buster and Stoutlad, the fat man looked decidedly bad, and complained of feeling very ill.

"I think—I've caught—death of cold," he grunted to Shorty Junior.

"Better go ter court for it an' git cured," observed that gay youth.

"Feel bad," moaned Buster, with a lugubrious look.

"Sore all over; eyes bloodshot."

"Well, yer orten ter soar all over der way yer do; an' as for yer eye, 't'yer can't git cured of dat its cure-eyous. See?"

The kid, after these remarks, was about moving off, but being struck with an idea, and always on a racket, he stopped and renewed the conversation.

"I'll make him tink he's goin' ter croak 'fore I's thro' wid him," he chuckled to himself.

"Yer does look dre'ful bad dis mornin', Mr. Buster," said the kid, looking as sad as the comic architecture of his features would allow. "Doesn't tink it's anything fatal, hey?"

Buster heaved a melancholy sigh, and looked as if he already saw himself reposing beneath a second-hand tombstone in some neglected churchyard.

"Yer mite die, dat's fact," exclaimed Shorty Junior; "an' I'se givin' it ter yer straight and not croaked."

Buster groaned and turned pale.

"Why don't yer manufacture yer will?" asked the kid, wiping away an imaginary chunk of liquid grief.

"I will," said the disconsolate Buster.

"I don't 'spect yer kin der it, but yer oughter brace up. Yer see it ain't usin' me rite. It doesn't say anything in yer contract 'bout dyin', an' 't'yer is in der habit of doin' dis sort of ting durin' our engagement, yer oughter tol' me 'bout it afor'."

Buster felt too bad to notice that his boss was coddling him, and when he was left alone his thoughts were not pleasant ones by any means.

Having got him in a doleful mood, the kid went out and sent in half a dozen men one after the other to tell his victim that they had never seen so sick a looking man as their lives as he appeared to be at that moment.

In fact, he was looking first-rate, and there was nothing more serious the matter with him than a fit of the blues; but when everybody told him, with a

sigh and a glance of pity, that he looked awful, he straightway made up his mind that he was going to shuffle.

And then the kid went at him again. This time in another way.

He got right behind him, where Buster could hear every word, and began talking to his dad, who was in the joke of course.

"Dis a sad case, dad," he began.

"It's ter bad," sighed Shorty.

"Er big man like him is liable to shake out any minute. I know'd a fat party just his size an' build, dat was tuck sick like dis, and der fat inside him melted, an' he 'sploded all of a sudden inter a thousand pieces."

Buster twitched nervously at this, and vainly tried to hear no more.

"Oughter have der coroner on han'," continued the unmerciful kid with an enormous wink.

"Spect it 'ed be best," answered his dad.

"Have ter have der coffin made ter order, I reckon."

"Yes, an' der hearse, ter."

Buster could stand no more, and he got up and feebly waddled away.

Shorty Junior followed him and began feeling his pulse.

"Got a kinder of a goneess feelin' 'bout yer, ain't it?" he anxiously inquired.

"That's it," gasped Buster, faintly.

"Yes, it allers takes 'im dat way. Radder weak in yer legs, hey?"

"Yes, yes," groaned Buster.

"Tort so. 't'yer don't git better putty soon yer'll be a goneer."

"Send for doctor," cried Buster, now thoroughly alarmed.

"One doctor's her good; man's big as yer is wants tree or four of 'em."

"Get a dozen."

"On'y one thing I save yer. I got a dose dat'll eider make yer continue ter hel' der fort or send yer up ter shove clouds."

"Give— to me. Gimme two doses."

The kid, looking as solemn as a whole medical faculty, said:

"Keep perfectly quiet while I's gone, an' I tink I kin save yer."

He went out to an apothecary's and had a dose of medicine put up, the mere smell of which, was enough to have knocked over an elephant.

The drugs were harmless, but one swallow of the mixture was quite enough to reconcile a man to almost any manner of death that offered.

He went back, and pouring out nearly a tumbler full of his prescription, handed it to Buster, and told him to swallow it down.

The fat man, groaning and sighing had come to the conclusion that nothing could save him, and he looked the picture of despair.

He tried hard to get the kid's dose inside of him, but the awful taste and smell were too much for any ordinary mortal creature.

"Can't take it," he muttered, faintly. "Lemme go quietly."

He tumbled back on a lounge and closed his eyes.

"But yer mus' take it," cried Shorty Junior.

"S'poser I's goin' ter waste a dollar's wort' of good medicine fer nothin'? Here, some of yer fellers lend me a han'."

Half a dozen grinning men—everybody was in the theracket—sprang forward and held Buster fast, while the kid pinched his nose, and poured the mixture down his throat.

When the last drop was taken they let him up, and a more demoralized-looking man was never seen.

He coughed, strangled, spit and swore all at once.

"Saved! saved!" yelled the kid, dancing around and waving the bottle over his head. "Why he looks hundred per cent. better 'ready."

"Oh, oh, oh! d—n!" spluttered Buster. "That dose makes me feel as if—I'd been—drugged through fire."

"It wasn't that kind of a drug," laughed Chips.

Everybody now took the opposite tact and assured Buster that he was all right and beginning to look as hearty as a buck.

The excitement had manned him up and cured his fit of blues, and in a little while he acknowledged that he felt as good as ever.

He was the most innocent of men, and had no more idea of a racket than a spitz dog of climbing a tree.

When all was over he grasped Shorty Junior by the hand and thanked him heartily, and assured him he had saved his life and that he should never forget it.

This almost made the kid roar in his face but he controlled himself, and said:

"I tort a man dat pulled down seven hun'ed pounds dead weight, could make death wait."

"I certainly thought, I had the cholera."

"No," joked the kid. "yer had der blues, der melon-cholera."

And full of glee at the success of his racket, he walked off smiling.

Shanks had watched the whole operation, but said nothing.

After Shorty Junior had gone away, the Yankee suddenly thought of a plan to sell the kid badly, and revenge both Buster and himself at once.

He had been hankering to get even with the imp for his many rackets, and the false detectives and dose of medicine gave him an idea.

He quitted the show at once, and made arrangements to put his plan in action.

The kid strolled off to the office where he and his dad had another laugh at the fat man's expense.

"He's der easiest gulled gulloot I ever see," said Shorty Junior. "Never drops on nothin'."

"'t'he ever drops on yer, he'll squash yer," remarked his dad.

"I isn't any ef dat kinder fruit."

"Dat was a pretty tuf dose yer shoved in him."

"Yes; 'nuf ter make him throw up everything, includin' his 'gagement'."

"Guess he won't lose any flesh by it."

"Ner' lose flesh, bust him; he's er solid man."

The kid lit a cigarette, poked up the bright fire, and then lay back in an easy chair.

"Dad," said he, "dis Buster business knocked some ting out of mer head till just now, dat I want ter tel' yer bout."

"I'm all ears, mer son."

"I'm alleasers sorry ter hear a man say dat, 'cause I he's all ears, he must be a Jack —"

"Ass well leave dat unsaid. Don't yer call yer dad names, or I'll give yer a lessen ye'll remember."

"Lessen yer chin, on' lessen ter me. I's thinkin' of takin' der gang out on a target excursion. What yer tink of der idea?"

"Shoot it!"

"What, der idea?"

"No, der target."

"I tink it'll give us a big day's fun, an' everybody'll joy demselves."

"It's a big ting an' chuck full'er rackets in der target parade. Don't yer miss it, mer son?"

"Which, der target?"

"No, der racket."

"Will yer give us prizes to shoot fer?"

"Wouldn't s'prise mer 'f I did. I'll give yer a silver castor."

"Cast'er dat han'som face of yers?"

"Yer kin git lot's of prizes."

"At prizes ter suit der times. Every man dat hits der target is tar get a prize, of course."

"When 's dis comin' off?" asked Shorty, with a smile at his son's ready answers.

"Der sooner der better," answered the kid. "I tink I'll go at it rite away. Want ter make a sensation wid it, so I'll git it in all der papers, an' mak' sure of a big crowd anyhow."

He set about the preparations at once, and was kept busy the balance of the day.

In the evening, as usual, the house was crowded, and everything and everybody, including Mr. Buster, who had entirely recovered both his health and good humor, Stoutlad, the Rev. Guppy, and Pete, the learned pig, did first-class, and kept the audience amused from the time they entered till the performance was over.

It was noticed that Shanks failed to show up, though nothing was said, and, in fact, very little thought about it.

The kid left about ten o'clock, and being in a hurry to get home took a short cut through the back street.

As he went whistling merrily down a long, dark block, a carriage suddenly dashed by and pulled up at the curbstone just ahead of him.

The door flew open and a man sprang out.

He looked about him as if confused, and spying the kid, he addressed him.

"Are you acquainted in this neighborhood?" he asked.

"Slightly," answered the kid coming to a halt.

"I am looking for a party called Shorty Junior," continued the man. "I was told he lived about here, but I can get no trace of him."

The kid's suspicions were aroused in a moment.

He thought it was a job.

"What der yer want wid Shorty Junior?" he exclaimed.

"Personally, nothing," replied the man, "but a lady in the coach who came over in the same steamer, is very anxious to have a most important interview with him."

This threw the kid off his guard, and he walked up to the carriage to take a look at its fair occupant.

Just as he got to the door he was quickly seized by two men who had kept concealed inside, and dragged in the coach.

The man who had been talking to him, jumped in, the door was slammed shut, and off they went at a lively gait.

One of his captors drew out a revolver and pointing it at his head, said:

"Keep perfectly quiet, or you are a dead man!"

The kid saw that he was in a bad box, and as he could do nothing against three vigorous men, he wisely remained passive and kept his mouth closed.

At first he thought their purpose was robbery, as everybody knew that he always carried about with him a handsome gold watch, a valuable diamond pin and a solid roll of greenbacks.

But he soon made out in the dim light that two of the men were, by their uniforms, police officers.

The whole thing was done so suddenly and so mysteriously that he knew not what to think of it.

He was not at all frightened—nothing could scare him—and resolved to see the adventure through if he must, but to escape if he could.

After rattling along at a furious rate for some time, in profound silence, the coach hauled up in front of a large granite building.

The kid thought now was his time to get away, but he was firmly seized by the two officers, his mouth stopped, and in a moment he was within the massive wall of the frowning pile.

He was swiftly conveyed through numerous long dark halls, and finally, after a whispered conversation that he failed to understand, a great oaken door was thrown open, and he found himself in a dimly-lighted room.

The apartment was a good-sized one, the ceiling lofty, and the windows were like those of a church.

A sickening smell pervaded the place and the air was damp and heavy.

About twenty people were in the room, mostly young men the kid thought as well as he could see by the sickly light, and they sat grim and silent around a long table.

As his eyes became more accustomed to the gloom, and he began to see objects plainer, he made up his mind that he must be in some sort of a medical institution.

There were several shelves full of bottles containing different colored liquids, at least a dozen skeletons hanging in glass cases, and in the dim distance, in a sort of a pit, something that looked very much like a half dissected body.

The officers placed him at the foot of the table, and as they did so everybody in the room arose and bowed and then silently resumed their seats.

Not a word was spoken.

The whole thing was a mystery to the kid, and he could make neither head nor tail to it.

He was not at all alarmed, but the solemnity of the scene, the dead body below him—he could now see it was that of a woman—the grave looks of the men in their long black gowns, the grinning skeletons in their cases, made long and narrow like coffins, and above all the dim, ghostly light filled him with awe and an unnameable dread.

The man at the head of the table got up and instantly all eyes were turned towards him.

In front of him lay a skull and he held in his hand a thigh bone which he used as a sort of gavel.

"Brethern of the faculty," he began, in a deep, rich

magistrate. The punishment shall be imprisonment for not longer than one year or less than one month."

During the reading of this Shorty Junior's feelings underwent several changes, and at the ending he was decidedly down in the mouth.

He knew now why he had been brought here.

For giving that awful dose to the fat man.

He had a vague idea that the medical faculty was a secret sort of body who had full authority to decide on such cases as his own.

He was in for it but resolved to go through with flying colors.

"Gentlemen," said a man near the middle of the table, who arose after the first speaker had sat down, "I believe you are all well acquainted with the details of the shocking outrage committed by the prisoner. I will briefly review them. He is the proprietor of a show. One of his performers falling sick he sent out for a vile mixture and forcibly poured it down the invalid's throat. When I add that this invalid is no ordinary man, but a living curiosity weighing over seven hundred pounds, the enormity of the prisoner's offense will strike you at once. He might almost as well have plunged a knife in his victim's heart, for in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred such a dose as was administered to such a man would prove fatal."

that the man next him had done the damage turned to him and said:

"Take care Charley old boy, you'll spoil the whole racket! Don't get any fire near that stuff, it'll burn like powder."

Shorty Junior overheard him.

Racket!

That one word let the cat right out of the bag.

"Well, I'm ber blowed!" said he in blank astonishment. "If it aint a job I'm a sinner!"

It had been carried out so neatly that he never tumbled once.

"An' dat stuff 'll burn like powder, will it," he said to himself. "Well I tink I'll take a han' in dis dish of fun myself."

He suddenly dropped to the floor, slipping out of the hands of those who held him, and quickly taking a match from his pocket, he lit it and tossed it among the papers.

In a moment the whole pile was ablaze and everybody at once sprang to their feet.

All was confusion. The grave board threw off their gowns and sober looks and jumped in to put out the fire.

In the height of the excitement the kid made a discovery.



Shorty Jr. seized a pail of water pretended to aim at the blaze, but dashed in the contents all over the president.

voice, and a most impressive manner, "the malefactor is present. It is well."

They all gazed at Shorty Junior, who was secretly wondering how the thing would end. In murder, robbery, or what?

"Prisoner," resumed the spokesman, addressing the kid, "I presume you are ignorant of the reason why you have been brought before this grave body of men."

"I give her up," promptly answered Shorty Junior, who would have his joke if the rope was around his neck to hang him, "but I tink der grave body better git back in its grave."

"Your position is perilous," exclaimed the spokesman, "and I forgive your levity. You have broken the law of the commonwealth, and must be punished."

He reached down and got a book, and while he did so the kid tried to think what particular law he had been breaking.

"Prisoner," he went on, opening the volume, "your crime comes under this section. Listen:

"And be it further enacted that any party or parties who shall give or cause to be given, either by persuasion or force, any dose, or prescription, or drug, or mixture of drugs, or any medicine whatsoever, unless he or they are duly authorized physicians holding a diploma as such, shall be tried by a full board of doctors."

"And be it further enacted that if proven guilty, he or they shall suffer such punishment as the board may advise, subject to the consent of the nearest sitting

"Dat's fact. Mite bin fatal," observed the kid, who, though he could joke, was far from feeling easy.

"I for one," continued the speaker, not heeding the interruption, "think that the prisoner should have meted out to him the severest penalty of the law."

Several gentlemen followed with remarks, some for and some against punishment, and finally a vote was taken.

Each man wrote his opinion on a paper, folded it, and handed it to the president, who, after looking over them, and consulting with a gentleman on his right, arose to announce the verdict.

"I'm ber dam," thought the kid, "'f dis isn't the worst scrape I ever jumped inter; but I guess I've got political 'fudgery 'nuf ter git mer out, whatever dey does."

"Prisoner," said the first speaker, solemnly, "your crime is a black one, but in consideration of your youth, and this being your first offense, we have concluded to let you off lightly. The sentence of this board is, that you swear you will never assume the functions of a doctor again as long as you live, and that you be compelled to take. A full dose of your own medicine!"

"Tak' dose dat medicine? I'm dam 'f I do," he yelled.

He tried to get away but was firmly held by two men, while the board in grim silence proceeded to mix up his tonic.

In his violent struggle he upset a bottle that was standing on the table and its contents ran down on the floor and in amongst a lot of loose papers.

One of the members of the board, evidently thinking

One of the officers who had arrested him was Shanks.

If his false beard had not partly slipped off, the long Yankee would never have been recognized.

He didn't know that Shorty Junior had spotted him, and before the muss was over he stole quietly away, and going home he and Shorty had a good laugh over having fooled Chips in the worst kind of a way once anyhow.

"I stan's rite up ter der rack and eats hay every time," grinned the kid to himself. "Dat fishball-eatin' galoot has laid me rite out cold, an' I doesn't deny it; but 'f I don't cook up a racket on him 'fore he's many days older, yer can swap mer off fer a second-hand porous plaster."

Shanks gone, the kid turned his attention to the fire.

"I'm hunk on dis gang, anyhow," he thought. "Dey is all scared, an' now 'f I kin on'y git der grand bounce on dat president dat was goin' ter make mer take dat medicine, I'll be all O. K."

Watching his opportunity, he seized a pail of water that had been brought in, and getting close up to his intended victim, he pretended to aim at the blaze, but dashed the contents all over the president with such force that that would-be legal luminary tumbled backward to the floor, and lay with his heels kicking in the air.

"Water fall was dere, mer countrymen!" cried the kid, striking a comic attitude.

The fire was soon put out after this, and it was found that very little real damage had been done.

The balance of the evening was spent in a very jolly

manner, and Shorty Junior didn't strike his hotel till the small hours.

The party proved to be a lot of young medical students, and they were as full of fun as an egg is full of meat.

His last words to them were:

"Fellers, don't yer give me 'way. I want ter git hunk on dat Shanks, so 'f yer see him tell him I took all dis ting in dead earnest an' went off widout ever tumblin' ter der joke 'tall."

They promised to do as he wished, and the kid went home thinking up a racket the whole way.

Next morning he appeared at the breakfast table, looking dull and gloomy.

He pretended, at first, to be anxious to avoid all conversation and acted as if he was haunted by remorse, and his spirits broken.

His dad and Shanks came in, and after seating themselves began to quiz him.

"What's der matter wid yer, kid?" asked his dad with a grin, "yer look 's solemncholy 's 'f yer spent der nite bein' chief mourner ter yer own funeral."

"Hey?" said Shorty Junior, as if he had just woke up.

"I say, what's der matter wid yer? Yer bin wrastlin' wid ugly dreams?"

"Nothin' matter," answered the kid shortly.

Shanks winked an elaborate wink at Shorty and observed:

"I reckon Chips must been out on some darn racket that kept him up late. Who was th' victim this time, kid?"

Shorty Junior went right on eating as if he had failed to hear a word, while his dad and Shanks nodded and smiled at each other in a very knowing way.

"Must be something wrong," exclaimed Shanks, after a while. "I never knew Chips to be so remarkably quiet for so long in my life."

"Boy," said Shorty, as if he was very much worried, "is yer sick? Der yer want a surgeon or er doctor ter come an' give yer a dose?"

Shanks had all he could do to keep from laughing at this broad reference to last night's joke, but the kid didn't seem to pay the slightest attention to him.

"A surgeon?" he questioned, very sedately. "Surgeon's not; ner I doesn't want ner dose nudder."

"Well, what's a makin' yer wrap yerself up in gloom dis way, anyhow?" still quizzed his dad.

"Well, here, dad an' Shanks both," said Shorty Junior, bracing up with an apparent effort. "I'll tell yer der hull story. Las' nite I had der most tuffest experience I ever backed inter in mer life, an' I hope I'll never have it 'gin."

He then, in a most serious manner, related the whole adventure, only instead of giving the real ending he declared that in the confusion following the fire he had slipped out and escaped.

"First I tort," explained the kid in conclusion, "dat dey was goin' ter murder me fer mer stamps, but when I see dem two policemen er course I knew dat wasn't der lay."

"Didn't yer know the officers?" asked Shanks. "Never see 'em before in mer life," answered Chips, earnestly.

"I tink somebody was givin' yer der racket," observed his dad, kicking Shanks under the table.

"Dere was no racket 'bout dat, dad, it was straight business from der word go. Dey mighter sent me up fer a year 't dey wanted ter. Dat's der law. Yer bet I'm goin' ter shake rackets cold after dis an' turn over a new leaf."

Shanks and Shorty left soon after this. A weak eyed young man, with a red nose and straggling whiskers had been a deeply interested listener to the kid's story.

He stepped up to our little hero when he was alone, and after asking him numerous questions about his scrape, finally said:

"Mr. Shorty, I am a detective—amateur. I beg to differ with you sir. I think they meant to plunder and if necessary, murder you. With your permission I will ferret out this black hand of assassins and hand them over to justice."

Shorty Junior, merely thinking the man was slightly off his center, told him to sail in, and thought no more about him.

And this conversation led to a lively racket which will be explained in due time.

Along in the afternoon the kid overheard his dad and Shanks talking.

"I'll cure th' darn runt of playing off his jokes, see if I don't," said the Yankee, "I'll give him another one befor' night, I'll bet."

"Better go easy," said Shorty, "he's a wretched lad ter handle, an' 'f he drops on yer he'll torture yer bad."

"If I don't give him another before he goes to bed, I'm willing to submit to any torture he can get up."

"Well, we'll jist see 'bout dat," said the kid to himself walking quietly away.

After the show was over that evening, Shanks started to go home.

As he stepped outside he was quickly surrounded by a crowd of men each one of whom, carried in his hand either a flambeau, a lantern or some other sort of light.

They got the bewildered Shanks right in the middle of them all, and wouldn't let him get away.

And preceded by a howling German band they marched straight down Broadway, followed by hundreds of yelling men women and children.

Poor Shanks was wild but he couldn't escape till he got opposite his hotel, when he made a sudden dive and succeeded in getting inside.

The kid stood there to receive him, grinning from ear to ear.

"What the devil's all this mean?" yelled Shanks, while the crowd without cheered him lustily.

"Why," answered the kid, shaking all over. "Didn't

yer say if yer couldn't give me a racket fore nite yer submit ter tortures? 'Dere's yer torches!"

CHAPTER IX.

At length the morning that was to witness the start of Shorty Junior's target excursion rolled round.

It was a beautiful day, and could not have been improved on had it been made to order.

The sun rose clear and bright, it was just cold enough to be pleasant, and everybody was feeling jolly and predicting a fine day's sport.

The whole town seemed to be aware of the fact that the boss show company of the world was going to turn out, and long before the hour of starting the streets in the vicinity of the museum were crowded with people.

The kid worked his way through the assemblage, and as he did so, men and boys, shop girls, women with babies in their arms; tramps, beggars—in fact, most everyone had something to say of him.

"Dere he goes now!"

"He's little but he's extremely good!"

"He's der biggest little man in dis country."

"Tree cheers for Shorty Junior!" sang out an enthusiastic bootblack.

The cheers were given with a will at which the kid laughed and slipped into the show, over the main entrance of which, by the way, was a large placard, reading:

"No performance this day."

Within, all was hurry and bustle. Those that were to march in the ranks were putting the finishing touches to their dresses, or burnishing up their arms, the musicians got out their instruments and arranged their notes, the invited guests indulged in a collation that had been provided—most of them doing little eating and a great deal of drinking—while everybody smiled, cracked jokes, and prepared for a high old day's fun.

Shorty Junior was all over and everywhere; hurrying up this man, helping another, having a good word for everybody, and finding out for himself that things were going right.

He thoroughly believed in the old saw, "if you want a thing half done get somebody else to do it; but if you want it attended to right, do it yourself."

He had always made this a rule, and as a result, had never bossed a failure in his life.

"Well, kid," said his dad, "tinge is pannin' out red hot dis mornin', an' I guess ter shootin' 'll be a success."

"Shooten wonder 'fit was," answered the kid. "We'll git der company mustard fust an' pepper der target afterwards."

"Yer is kinder saucy dis mornin'."

"'F der gang can't knock der stuffin' out of der target, I'll bet dey kin out of der dinner."

"Oh, dat's der time dey'll be red hot an' still'er eatin'."

"Lettus have peas."

At nine o'clock everything was ready, and the company was marched out to the street and formed.

Their appearance was greeted with a storm of laughter and applause, such as is seldom heard, and the police had all they could do to keep the crowd back.

The boys knew all the principal performers by sight, and had a shout for each of them.

"Pipe ol' Buster, der fat man in er swalley-tail coat."

"He'll swalley dat 'fore he gits back!"

"Oh! look at der gaut wid dat long sword!"

"Wonder if he ever drawed dat in der cause of freedom?"

"No. He drawed it in er lottery!"

"Here comes ol' Bones, der thin man!"

"Somebody git his stove or he'll freeze!"

"Hey! hey! Look at ol' Parson Guppy an' his red nose!"

"I say, parson, how's Pete dis mornin'—sober?"

And so it went on, everybody cheering, yelling, and going in for a lark generally.

As soon as all were in line, "forward" was the word, the band struck up the "Mulligan Guard," and every man stepped out boldly.

Such a queer-looking parade was never seen before.

First came, as is always the case at a target excursion, some five hundred grinning, ragged boys, with their blacking boxes over their shoulders, and keeping time to the music; then came the band, a large one, and then the company proper.

At the head marched the giant, wearing a tall bear-skin hat that made him look at least ten feet high. He carried a sword fully two yards long, and at either side of him walked a dwarf carrying a small flag.

Then came in companies all the people connected with the show.

The no-armed man, the wild Indians, the ferocious cannibals, what is its, the three armed man, tattooed men, thin men and fat—in fact, everybody.

They were all togged out in fantastic dresses, and each man had a step of his own, and carried his gun as best suited himself.

Stoutlad and Guppy both had charge of companies, and while the former gave terrific orders, which nobody paid the slightest attention to, the latter kept moistening his inwards with fluid out of a good-sized flask.

The giantess and fat woman were in the middle of the procession, on a gaily decorated car drawn by eight horses—the giantess representing Venus, and the fat lady the goddess of liberty.

Shorty Junior, his dad, Shanks, the judges and invited guests were all in coaches, and followed on behind.

They went up Broadway, Fourteenth Street and the Fifth Avenue to the Harlem depot, where they took a

special train that landed them near Schwizebier's Garden, in the lower part of Westchester County.

And up these fashionable thoroughfares the motley crew created a first-class sensation.

Staid old business men going down town roared till their sides ached; dandies giggled and cried: "Gad bless me, yer know." Servant girls peeped out of upper windows, and aristocratic belles crowded the balconies, and waved at them the most dainty of cambric handkerchiefs.

They arrived at the grounds as gay a lot of people as ever met together, and the first thing they did was to go for beer.

Everything was free, the kid standing the whole expense. He never did any half-way business. When he gave his employees a blowout, if they didn't enjoy themselves it was no fault of his.

And then the shooting began.

The target was set up at a hundred yards, every man to have three shots.

Shorty Junior, though not going for a prize, opened the ball, and put his three shots plump in the bull's-eye every time.

This was greeted with a round of cheers, and then the regular popping by the company commenced.

And such shooting!

During the first round not a solitary soul hit the target; at the second, the only safe place to stand was right behind the target itself, and when the third round came to be shot, hardly a man on the ground could see the target at all.

The kid kept his eye open for rackets all the time; and when Mr. Buster waddled up to take his first pop at the target, he went for him.

He put three full charges of powder in the gun he was to shoot with, and a couple of bullets on top of that.

Buster's attempt to shoot made everybody grin, for he was so fat, and his arms so short that he couldn't reach the trigger.

"Hum," grunted he. "Very awkward. What'll I do?"

They got him out of the difficulty by tying a string to the trigger, and then with a smile of confidence he seized the gun, took a long and steady aim, and pulled.

No report followed.

"What devil—matter now?" he gasped, looking astonished.

"Why," said the kid, "when a gemmen's goin' ter shoot a gun, it's allers best ter raise der hammer fust."

Buster looked foolish, cocked the gun this time, took another aim, shut his eyes, and "spang" she went.

He rolled right over backwards, and turned more flip-flaps than a circus man.

"Who banged me—with a sledge-hammer?" he groaned, as they picked him up.

"You hit it! You hit it!" everybody yelled.

"Hit what?" he asked, rubbing himself.

"What yer aimed at," laughed the kid. "Der sun Yer shot rite up straight, an' 'f yer wait a minute ye'll see der ol' ting bust."

The fat man went off grunting and growling, and soon after rolled the Rev. Guppy to take a chance.

He was blooming full, and didn't care whether school kept or not.

Chips had been laying for him.

"Now, then, ladies and gentlemen," began Guppy, taking up the gun, "prepare to witness something—ah—astonishing."

I will back to the bar get

If I do not hit the target.

Edgar A. Poe. Stand aside and let me bore the very center out of you. Eh, what do you call 'em?"

Shorty Junior gave a peculiar whistle and the target began to rock violently from side to side, something like a pendulum, only upside down.

Guppy aimed at it two or three minutes, and then lowered his gun.

"What's the matter with it!" he asked. "What makes it bob around that way?"

"Bob round!" exclaimed the kid with a surprised look. "You must have 'em bad. Dat's perfectly quiet."

"No, sir," said Guppy, staring at it hard. "It's a wagging."

"No 'taint," asserted the kid, grinning.

"What is it then?"

"Why, it's a target."

"Yes, I know; but it keeps wagging, this way."

"Yer got 'em awful when yer can't tell a wagon from a target, yer better wheels off an' retire."

"All same," cried Guppy. "I'll shoot the old thing flying."

He drove away at it, missed, and immediately went off for a drink.

Stoutlad came along soon after this, and as he had been blowing about his shooting, they expected him to hit the target at least.

He took a steady aim and pulled the trigger.

Something went whistling through the air and brought up with a dull thud. He had hit the target.

With the ramrod which he had forgotten to remove.

"Guess dat doesn't count," said the kid, appealing to the judges. "Rammer rite, or rammer wrong?"

They wouldn't allow the shot, and Stoutlad had to shoot again, this time making a miss.

While he was growling at his bad luck, Mr. Guppy, fuller than ever, returned and insisted on having another show.

"All rite," said the kid, "jist wait one second."

He whispered to a small boy standing by, who at once ran down to the marker and spoke to him.

The result was that the original target was quickly taken down and a much smaller one substituted in its

place—a little fellow about as big around as the bottom of a pail.

Guppy never noticed the change till he ran his eye along the barrel of his gun to take aim.

He dropped his piece and exclaimed,

"By—eh—Abishalom, sir. What's the matter with that target now? Has it—sh—shrunk?"

"Der ain't nuthin' matter wid it 'tall," said the kid. "Dat's der same target yer shot at before," and then, with a very serious look he continued, "I tell yer Guppy, yer clean gone. Yer better go see a doctor."

He let the gun fall from his hands, and in a melancholy voice, asked,

"Do you really think I've eh—got 'em?"

Cert," answered the kid.

Then, by the gods at once I'll—eh—go get another one k."

o use," laughed the kid, watching the reverend waddle amble away, "can't scare dat ol' rooster fer a cent."

They had a good thing on Stoutlad when the giant shot. After he had put the powder and ball in his gun, he suddenly seized the thin man and tried to shove him down the barrel.

Stoutlad howled like a hyena, and when he was once on his feet he fiercely demanded:

"What do you mean by that, sir?"

"Excuse me," answered the giant, with a wink, "I mistook you for the ramrod."

"Great gor!" he howled. "Did I—do that?"

"Oh dis is awful!" groaned the kid, pretending to be very much shocked. "Come over till we see if he's dead."

They went near enough to see the body lying stretched out, when Buster refused to go closer.

"Good gor! Mr. Shorty, what'll—I do? Man come—damages—hey?"

"Dat so," answered the kid; "better hide yer 'way, I reckon. Come 'long wid me."

He waltzed the fat man, who was nearly frightened out of his wits, up to the hotel, and finding a little closet, he squeezed him into it. Telling him to remain quiet, he locked the door and left him.

"I'll scare ol' fatty haf ter def, 'fore I see through wid him," he grinned, and went out and got one of the invited guests to personate the owner of the defunct quadruped.

He took him right up to the room where Buster was concealed.

"Don't talk to me, sir!" exclaimed the supposed horse owner, quite loud enough for the fat man to hear. "I know who killed the animal; it was that seven hundred pound fool you employ! I know him sir, and I'll have his heart's blood. That horse cost fifteen hundred dollars only yesterday. I'll have him in jail before night, in jail, sir! I'll cowhide him! I'll kill him!"

The kid pretended to try and calm the excited man

"Help! help!" moaned Buster. "Don't shoot, for gor's sake!"

"Three shots a piece, gentlemen, and aim low," roared Guppy.

The kid didn't want to go too far, so at this moment he pretended to dash into the room.

"Hol' on," he yelled. "Don't fire, der's a man in dat closet."

He opened the door, and Buster, pale as a ghost, trembling, and sweating like a bull, stepped out.

They set him down and gave him a glass of brandy and water, while one and all assured him that they hadn't the remotest idea that he had been in there.

"I was jist in time," said the kid; "in 'nudder moment yed bin a gonner!"

"Thank you," sighed Buster, mopping the perspiration from his brow.

"An' der hoss is all rite ter. It wasn't der trotter, but an' ol' plug, an' I settled der ting for ten dollars."

This news brought Buster around at once.

"Thank you, Mr. Shorty," he exclaimed; "don't know what do without you. When I'm in scrape, always at hand, an' git me out. Thank you 'gain."

The kid shook hands with him and left to have a good laugh.

"He's der very softest dat was ever made," he said.

He went down to look at the shooting once more, and found it as bad as bad could be.



Buster looked foolish, cocked the gun this time, took another aim, shut his eye, and "spang" she went.

They geyed Stoutlad so much about this that he went off mad and refused to return.

Shorty Junior left the crowd shooting and took a stroll through the grounds to see what his men were up to. He found some jumping, some running races, some wrestling, all drinking more or less, and what pleased him most, all apparently enjoying themselves.

In his walk he ran across, just outside the park, the body of a dead horse, which had evidently only been recently placed there.

This suggested a racket.

Calling some of his men he had the body raised and propped up against a fence. Then he had a rope tied about its neck and left one of his men there to watch.

"Now, sonny," said he to this man, "keep yer eye on der shooters, an' when yer see Buster fire, yer pull on der rope an' upset der hoss."

Going back he found the fat man and invited him to come up and take his last shot.

"Now, Buster," exclaimed Shorty Junior, "be careful. Dis is yer on'y show, so make a good shoot fer a good prize."

Buster promised to do his best. He took an easy position, aimed long and steadily, shut both eyes, as he always did, pulled the trigger hard, and spang! she went.

"Did I hit it?" he gasped.

"Hit it! course yer did," cried the kid. "Dere! over dere! dere he goes!"

Buster looked just in time to see the dead horse tumble over.

down, but it was a failure. With many threats of dire vengeance, he finally went off to get, he said, an officer.

Poor Buster, more and more frightened, and nearly smothered, could do nothing but groan inwardly, and curse his bad luck.

The mischievous Chips, didn't intend to let up on him yet by a jug full.

He instructed Guppy and several others what to do, and conducted them up to the room.

"Gentlemen," began Guppy, in a loud voice, "why should we shoot at the—ah—target? It is a venial sport—ah—a waste of time—"

I've lost a day! the prince who nobly cried, Had been an emperor without his—ah—target—

Me and Shakespeare. Let us put up a mark on the door of this closet and fire at it with—ah—pistols. I will draw a mark here."

He took a stick and began scratching out a spot, which had they really shot at and came anywhere near, every bullet must have found a lodgement in the ponderous stomach of the prisoner within.

Buster gave birth to a groan that could have been heard half a mile off, but his tormentors paid no attention to it.

"There is your—ah—mark," continued Guppy. "Take your places. I will count one, two, three, and at the word three you will fire. Are you—ah—ready?"

"Mus' have der ol' ting riddled 'fore we go, anyhow," he exclaimed.

He ordered the men to fire at it by squads, and not to leave it until it was full of holes.

He ran across his dad and Shanks, who had been having bushels of fun in their own way, and coddling them at once.

"Shot yet?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Shanks.

"Hit der target?"

"Nary a time."

"Yer a couple of fine shooters. Bet neider one of yer kin hit a barn door."

"Bet ten dollars we kin—hey, Shanks?" cried Shorty.

The money was put up and guns procured.

"Dere's yer barn door," said Chips, pointing one out; "now bang away."

They fired ten shots each at it, and every one went clear through.

And they geyed the kid, and laughed at him most unmercifully.

"How are you, barn door?" grinned Shanks.

"How are you, ten dollars?" chuckled Shorty.

"Want to make another bet?" asked Shanks.

"Dat's hunky door-y shootin'," laughed Shorty.

"Door, ra me, fa, la," hummed the Yankee.

The kid took this wagging remarkably good natured.

"I's door gone. f yer doorn't hit a big ting like that. 'Spects yer tink dat's a door-able shootin'. yer couple of ol' barnacles."

"Yer orter be barnished outer der country for dem kind of jokes," said his dad.

"Well, let's go down an' see what kind of shots yer made at it, anyhow," suggested Shorty Junior.

They went down, and, for barn door shooting, found they had done very well indeed.

"Well, yer won der bet," owned up the kid, "an' dere's yer ten spot."

He handed his dad a bill, and they were about moving away when he stopped them.

"Hol' on. Le's see what's in dis place, 'fore we go."

He pulled the door open and they looked in. Then they started back in amazement and turned all colors.

"You miserable runt!" roared Shanks.

"I'll bust yer back for dis!" howled his dad.

"This is a nice snap, ain't it?" whined Shanks.

"I'm berdam!" cried Shorty.

They saw in that building, just within the door, a fine buggy wagon, which they had riddled with bullets from the back to the dashboard.

"How is yer barn door shootin'?" yelled Shorty Junior, prepared to glide at a moment's notice.

"Won't cost yer more'n a couple a hundred to fix dat up."

"Why don't yer let yer tongues wag on dat?"

"Won't be ser hard fer der hoss ter bullet now!"

"It's like a boardin' house bed; dam-aged an' buggy."

He would have given them more, but they made a dive for him and he had to devote his whole attention to getting away.

If they had got hold of him his fun would have had a sudden ending for that day at least.

They couldn't get out of the snap, so Shorty told the landlord to have it fixed and send the bill to him, and he would settle it.

"He knew it was there all the time," growled Shanks.

"Course he did," replied Shorty. "I'll bounce him fer dis."

The kid saw them coming, and poking his head out of a second story window of the hotel, he hollered to them.

"I say, I s'pose yer wheelin' ter have dem wheels fixed, hey? Did yer spoke ter der lan'lord yet?"

They knew they couldn't get at him, so they wisely bottled their wrath and bided their time.

Shorty Junior again went to look at the shooting, and finding the target well riddled, and presenting a fine, banged up appearance, he ordered the firing to cease and invited all hands in to dinner.

Everybody dropped their guns and rushed for hash. The meal was served in a large room, and the table, gaily decked with flowers and fruit, looked picturesque and inviting.

The kid, his dad, Shanks, the ladies, invited guests and judges occupied one board, while the company found places at another.

On the latter's table were several imposing looking big turkeys, and three or four tempting fat hams.

To the majority of the company it made very little difference about courses, it being all the same to them whether soup came after desert or before, so long as they got all the bill called for.

They pitched in pell mell, each man helping himself.

"Boys," said Shorty Junior to those around him, "look out for a gran' kick at dat oder table."

"Is yer bin puttin' up a job on 'em?" asked his dad.

"Jist wait an' see."

And sure enough there was a growl right away.

"I say tell ye, boss," said one of the cannibals from Hichicouji, "sure th' turkeys bees wooden wans."

"I wooden mind little ting like dat," grinned the kid with a wink.

"Yes," howled a wild Indian, springing to his feet, "an' th' 'ams are honly stuffed with cotton, yer know."

"Dat's hamazin'," answered Shorty Junior. "Stuff yerself wid der stuffin' an' make believe yer like it."

They begged of the kid to furnish them with something substantial, if it was only a chunk of corn beef.

After he had driven them almost wild with the sight of constantly-arriving luxuries for his own table, and the starving crew had been well guyed and laughed at, he let up on them, had the rubbish cleared away and the regular dinner placed before them.

And to have seen those fellows eat would have made a dyspeptic man cut his throat from envy.

The feed was a first-class one, and they bolted everything that came before them, and loudly yelled for more.

After dinner came wine, toasts, speeches, and cigars—all good, especially the speeches, which were short, crisp and witty.

The toast, "Long Live Shorty Junior, the Boss Showman of the World!" was drank standing, and with three times three.

Then came the distribution of the prizes.

As not a solitary soul of them had hit the target at the regular shooting, they made a lottery of it.

Everybody received a number, duplicate numbers were put in a hat and shaken up, and the kid drew them out.

As fast as a number was announced the one holding the corresponding figures came forward and received a prize.

And at first all thought they were sold again, for the prizes proved to be the oddest lot, being mostly made of tin, iron or wood.

"Number twenty-seven," shouted Shorty Junior, after making a dive in the hat.

"Come up twenty-seven an' tak' der first prize."

Stoutlad proved to be the lucky man, and he was presented, with all due decorum, and without the ghost of a smile, with a brass coal scuttle that stood four feet high at least.

He was struck dumb with surprise. When he finally found his voice, he feebly asked:

"What'll I do with it?"

"Scuttle it," yelled someone.

"Get in it when yer coal," howled another.

"Cut it up an' sell it for door-plates," suggested a third.

"I doesn't know what ye'll do wid a coal scuttle," grinned the kid; "les' yer invite yer friends ter git inside of it an' have a coal-ation."

Stoutlad stepped back, looking very doleful, but when he found a good sized greenback at the bottom of his prize, he straightway felt first-rate.

The giant got the next one, which proved to be a little pewter drinking cup, about the size of a wine glass.

"Pon my soul," he exclaimed, on receiving it.

"Why," joked Shorty Junior, "yer wouldn't pawn yer soul for a little ting like dat, would yer?"

The giant was also made happy by finding a bill inside.

Parson Guppy got an iron writing pen some three feet long.

As he turned it over and over he exclaimed:

"The pen is mightier than the sword! It is more—ah—penetrating, so to put it. I cannot write with this but that is—ah—all right. I'll keep Pete in it."

And Buster got the very last prize.

A glass diamond as big as a cabbage.

It was now time to return; so the company was ordered to fall in, and they were soon on the way back to the city.

They received a grand ovation on the homeward march, and as everybody had had lots of fun, and all they could eat, drink and smoke, Shorty Junior's target parade was voted a great success, and next day all the papers were full of it.

CHAPTER X.

THE morning after the parade, the kid and his dad left the hotel early, and started down for the show.

"Feel kinder dry dis mornin', dad," said Shorty Junior with a grin, "guess dat must bin dry champagne we dranked yesterday."

"Got a kinder weakness dat way meself, kid," answered his dad. "Dunno wedder dat was dry champagne or not, but I know we left der bottles very dry."

"Same way it's left me. Les amble in an git a drink."

"Go it, mer son, I'm wid yer."

They entered a lager beer saloon and stepped up to the bar.

"Hello, vonst, Mr. Shortys!" exclaimed the proprietor, who knew them, and was behind the bar himself. "Dot's von big barade yer got yesterday mid der poys. All dose newspapers vas fullud out mid it ter-day."

"Yes, dat vas putty good racket," answered Shorty Junior. "What yer goin' ter have, dad?"

"Well, mer son, I reckon a small five cent glass of German beer is good nuff fer me."

"Dat'll fill der measure of my ambition ter-day, I guess. Give us two small glasses of beer."

"Vat?" cried the proprietor who had been speaking to some one else just then and failed to hear the order.

"Two small glasses of beer," repeated the kid.

"All right," echoed the boss, "two schmal glasses of beer."

"Dat's it," grinned Shorty Junior, seeing a chance for a joke, "two small glasses of beer, but not too small."

This play on words evidently bewildered the boss, as he failed to catch the meaning.

He got a couple of glasses, went to the keg, fooled around it for a while, and then came back.

"Oxause me, Mr. Shortys," he began with a perplexed look, "vat did you order vonst?"

"Two small glasses of beer, but not too small glasses of beer," slowly explained the kid, while he and his dad both chuckled.

The boss again picked up the glasses, went over to the keg, scratched his head, and once more returned.

"Two schmal glasses, don't it?" he asked, hesitatingly.

"Certainly," said the kid, "but not too small glasses."

"Vat is dose tam humbug you make mid me? Two schmal glasses vat ain't two schmal glasses, hey? Oxblain dot vonst."

But before Shorty Junior could say a word the boss tumbled.

And then followed such an explosion of mirth as is seldom witnessed.

That German ha! ha! haw! till he was black in the face, and then he rolled about behind the bar, and finally insisted on setting up a whole keg of beer or anything else they wanted.

"Oh, dot's von pully shoke," he howled. "I shall told dot all day to mine customers, an' I makes 'em split out der sides out mid it."

And he did tell it to several—or rather tried to tell it, but somehow, in his hands, it didn't seem to pan out good.

His version of it was something like this:

"Come here vonst," he would say to his customer, "I vant ter told yer der piggest shoke vat you never heard."

"Some shentlemens make in mine blace dis mornin', an' one of dem he says out, 'Make us out two schmal glasses of beer vonst, but not in two little glasses.' See? Ain't dot a pully shoke?"

The customer would shake his head, and say:

"I don't see anything funny about that."

"Vy don't yer see? Two schmal glasses of beer but he don't vant der glasses little—I can't understand does pizness. Dot make me holler right out dis

schmornin', it vas so funny, an' now it's no goot. Dem Shorty fellers must humbug me mid it somehow."

Shorty Junior and his dad, laughed heartily over the success of this little joke.

"He isn't got long ser fer's ter know der difference twix two an' too," observed his dad.

"No," replied his hopeful son, "he isn't had der tuition, an' didn't tumble."

"Der only two he knows is two an' two makes four."

"So dey does; an' 'f yer git nuf of 'em, two an' two 'll make a fortune. Here we is ter der show. Les go in der office an' have a smoke."

The kid lit his cigarette, and Shorty a cigar.

"Where did you get der cabbarger?" began Shorty Junior as he noticed that his dad's cigar wouldn't draw.

"Dis a't mer gra-beola, mer son," exclaimed Shorty with a smile, still tryin' to extract smoke from his weed. "Dis a Conn. cut wrapper, an' Havana filler."

"Should tink ye'd git yer filler, dat in one smoke. An' don't yer give me n' Connecticut wrapper; dat's regular Rapper-hannock."

"Dat'll do of dem kind o' jokes," grinned his dad, throwin' the smoker away, and lighting another. "What's der good of makin' light of a cigar dat won't light."

"Dad," said the kid, after an interval of silence, during which they had both done their best to fill the office with smoke, "every show racket dat I's got up is turned out fust-class ser far, hey?"

"Couldn't be better, mer son," answered Shorty, puffing away vigorously.

"Der papers is all chuck full of dis target parade we had yesterday, an' dat's goin' ter make business git rite up on its hind legs an' howl."

"Shouldn't wonder."

"F dis isn't a big advertisement in der dailies dere never was one."

"Yer rite all der time, mer son."

"Sides der weekly papers is all goin' ter tak' a big hack at it, ter."

"Guess yer kin look out fer regular rush."

"Miter's well keep der ol' stone rollin'."

"Rollin' stone gathers no moss."

"I isn't reachin' fer moss; greenbacks is what I'm lookin' fer all der time, dad. I tink I'll give 'em nudder one."

"What? nudder racket yet?"

"Jist so, parent."

"What yer goin' ter pass 'em out dis time?"

"I's tinkin' of gittin' up a gran' fancy dress ball."

"Dat's a bally idea. Ball-ance ter yer partners an' all han's 'round, hey?"

"Dat's it 'zactly. Put all der livin' curiosities in fancy costumes an' mak' it a jolly masquerade. I'll hire der 'Cadmy of Music, charge tree dollars a ticket, an' I bet sell more of 'em dan der place will hold."

"Kid, I tink yer hit der nail on der dead 'gain, sure pop."

"It's full of dollars an' rackets."

"Combines business wid pleasure, ser ter put it."

"Now yer is gittin' it straight. Yersee a comes out even I's satisfied, 'cause it's bound ter be a big advertisement, anyhow; an' I rudder reckon we'll have heaps of notices free, lots of fun an' make money 'sides."

"Some of dem roosters 'll look putty queer in fancy dresses—Buster fer instance."

"Yer rite dey will. What yer tink of dis idea of mine?"

"Tink it's uer best yit. Go long, an' I's wid yer all der while."

"Den I'll 'gin ter prepare rite 'way, an' git out mer posters an' tickets."

The kid was full of his new idea, and went at it with a will.

He secured the building, got out a lot of fancy-colored bills, headed, SHORTY JUNIOR'S GRAND MASQUERADE BALL. ALL THE WONDERFUL LIVING CURIOSITIES WILL APPEAR IN COSTUME—arranged his plans, and began to sell tickets like hot cakes.

All the nob's took to the ball at once and in society it became the thing.

Indeed, he could have sold more tickets than he could, as he had said, found room to stow the people away in.

Shorty Junior had not forgotten that he owed Shanks one for putting up that little job on him with the medical students, by a long chalk.

He had determined to get hunk with the Yankee at the first convenient opportunity.

"Guess," said he to himself, "f yer overhaul yer spellin' book, ye'll find it set down in dere dat two kin play at dat arrestin' game, an' one kin play it good deal better dan toddler."

"An' toddler one is me. So Mr. Shank look out for yerself."

The day of the conversation with his dad about the grand ball proved an extraordinary busy one, yet, nevertheless, he found time to cook up a racket for the special discomfort of his long-legged chum.

And he concluded to work the thing all alone by himself.

As he had anticipated, the newspaper notices of the target parade proved to be a big card, not only the first day, but for many succeeding days after.

It seemed as if everybody that read or heard about it wanted to have a look at Shorty Junior himself, his renowned show shop and his now celebrated marksmen.

The battered target excited a good deal of attention and the queer prizes, all on exhibition, called forth many a joke.

It made no difference whether one spoke to Stoutlad, Buster, Guppy, or, in fact to anyone in the show, they all declared that they, personally, had put three shots right in the bull's-eye, and had taken the first prize

Indeed the Reverend Mr. Guppy had told this to so many visitors that he began to believe it himself, and took great pride in pointing out his three shots, which, somehow, were never the same ones.

"What's dat, mister?" asked a small boy, pointing to Buster's prize, the big glass diamond.

"That my son," replied Guppy, with a magnificent wave of his hand, as if he were addressing some ten thousand people instead of a lad of ten years, "that, sir, came from Africa, were the lion roareth and the wangedoodle mourneth for its first born, ah! Where the gentle elephant roams the sandy desert vast, and the laughing hip-onthomas wallows in its native—ah! waters.

From Afric's sunny mountains,
To India's coral strand,
Where the rhinoserious doth gambol,
And feed on the quiet clam—

Partly Watts' partly my own. It is my own. It's a gem. It is a diamond."

"Dimon!" exclaimed the boy with gaping mouth. "I tort it was er skylight."

The people kept coming and coming till there seemed no end to them, and the money flowed into the treasury in a perfect stream.

The kid was in his glory.

A full house every day—full pockets, and laughing audiences.

business, dad. I want ter get a good roof over yer head and Shanks, dat's fact."

The Yankee immediately had visions of a snug house in town, richly furnished.

"That'd be right down darn kind of you, kid, if you'd do that," said he.

"Where der yer tink ye'll git dis roof, kid," asked his dad, anxiously, for he too thought it wouldn't be a bad thing to be presented with a comfortable home.

"Up on Blackwell's Island," replied the kid with a wink. "I'll git yer both in the poor-house next week."

"None of that kind of shanty for me," growled Shanks, considerably disappointed.

"I shan'ty go dere nu'der," laughed Shorty. "House dat fer high," grinned the kid.

"I want ter go higher dan dat," replied his dad.

"Oh, I guess yer want ter higher a palace," cried Shorty Junior, full of glee.

"For my part," began Shanks, "give me a nice little—"

That is as far as he got.

At this moment a big policeman stepped up to him, and, laying his hand on his shoulder, said, in a husky voice:

"You are my prisoner."

Shanks started back in blank surprise, and turned pale, while both Shorty Junior and his dad looked on in blank astonishment.

full of wonderment, they moved towards the station-house.

"What yer bin up ter, anyhow, Shanks!" whispered the kid, on the way.

"Dunno; darn it I do," he answered.

"Funny," said the kid, and they proceeded along in silence.

Arriving at the house of the green light, they entered.

Shanks was immediately arraigned before the desk, behind which sat the captain himself.

No one else was in the room, and the captain looked glum and serious.

"Good evening, gentlemen," said he with a nod.

"Evenin', captain," exclaimed Shorty Junior, walking up in front of him. "What's all dis mean? Ain't dere som' mistake here?"

"I am sorry to say that there is not, Mr. Shorty," he answered, for he knew the party well. "Duty is duty the world over, however unpleasant it may be."

"But what's der charge agin mer friend?" asked the kid, impatiently.

"Mr. Shanks," said the captain, addressing that individual, "you stand charged with impersonating an officer on the night of December—th, and illegally arresting a man, and abducting him."

"Good gracious!" cried Shanks, looking at Shorty Junior.

"I'm ber dam!" exclaimed the kid.

"Serious charges, gentlemen," observed the captain.



Shanks, still in his outlandish costume looking like an escaped lunatic, strode in front of the desk growling at the clerk.

"Tell yer what, dad," he said, "dat target racket was a screamer an' makes der show draw like a mustard plaster."

"Never seed anything like it in mer life, sonny," answered Shorty, who was raking in the greenbacks at the box office window.

"E we couldn't hit der target, we kin der public every time," continued the kid.

"No outers wid dem, 'cause dey all center here," laughed his dad.

"Yes, an' fifty centers at dat," added the kid. "Jist proves what I allers said, dad."

"What's dat?"

"Chuck out a dollar fer fun, an' ye'll rake in ten fer a stake."

"Er tenderloin steak, eh, kid?"

"Yer ten-der yer biz, an' don't make tuff jokes."

It was the third evening after the parade, and the receipts had been enormous.

The show was over, and Shorty Junior, his dad, and Shanks, all feeling as gay as larks, left to go home.

They started together, and began to cod each other on the way.

"I say, Shanks," said Shorty, "der kid's gettin' ser rich now, I s'pects be'll be buyin' a block of brownstone fronts first ting yer know."

"Yes, an' settin' up a carriage," chimed in Shanks, "with his coat of arms on the panel—a monkey on a piano."

"Ye needn't laughed," came in Shorty Junior, quite seriously; "I is tinkin' of jumpin' in der real state

They all knew the officer well, as he was one who had frequently been to the show, and had many favors, in the shape of free tickets, extended to him.

"Wh—wh—why," gasped Shanks, who was so startled that he could hardly speak; "what's the meaning of this?"

"It means," replied the policeman, firmly, "that you are wanted."

"But look here, old man," spoke up the kid, earnestly. "Yer must made a mistake. Yer know dis gem' man, Mr. Shanks, don't yer? He 'longs ter my show; he's all rite. Ain't yer got hol' der wrong party?"

"Shanks that's th' name!" exclaimed the officer.

"I know my man, Mr. Shorty Junior, an' my orders are to take him in."

"Well, what's der charge? What's der charge?" asked Shorty.

"Yes, what am I charged with?" inquired Shanks, nervously.

"The captain will have to tell you that. All I know is, I've got orders to arrest you."

"But," spoke up the kid, who didn't seem to want to see his friend lugged off in this summary fashion; "why arrest Mr. Shanks ter-nite? I'll ber 'sponsible fer him, an' we'll come 'round an' see der captain in der mornin'."

"Well, you know Mr. Shorty, I'd do anything to oblige you," replied the man of law, "but I must do my duty, come what will."

"There was no use arguing the question further, and

"But, darn it, it was only done in fun," explained Shanks.

"Why, 'course it was," chimed in Shorty Junior.

"I am der party what was 'rested, an' I ain't kickin' fer a cent 'bout it."

"Er coorse he ain't," broke in his dad. "It was only a racket."

"Sorry, gentlemen, but the law doesn't recognize fun. Impersonating an officer and abduction are both state's prison and finable offenses. The court may let you off lightly, Mr. Shanks, but I don't see it."

Shanks, though not a physical coward, was a moral one.

If it had simply been a matter of fighting the captain himself, he would have gone at it with a will and come out with flying colors. But the idea of being clapped into a cell and locked up, of being paraded through the streets in the morning, set before a stern judge and a throng of idle lookers on, and perhaps be condemned to go to jail, was too much for him.

The thoughts of these things weakened and worried him; made him down-hearted, and caused him to shake in his boots.

Trying a man before a mock board was all good fun, but real officers and an undoubted station-house, knocked all laughter in the head.

He was the most frightened man in the country.

Shorty Junior had a private talk to the captain, which Shanks could not help overhearing.

"Yer doesn't really tink it'll go hard wid him, hey, captain?" asked the kid in a low voice.

"I am afraid it will."
 "What yer tink he'll git?"
 "Probably a year in prison, and certainly a heavy fine."

This made the Yankee's under jaw drop and his eyes looked as if they had concluded to jump out of his head and start in life for themselves.

"Gentlemen," continued the captain, "I am sorry, but I can't help you," and then turning to the man who had brought Shanks in, he went on. "Officer take the prisoner below and lock him up."

They all began talking together, begging the captain to let Shanks off, but he declined to do so; and the unfortunate Yankee, paler than ever, trembling in every limb, and feeling that he was a gone goose, was carted off into a cell.

Before he was removed, the kid grasped his hand, and whispered to him:

"Keep up a stout heart ol' man, I'll never go back on yer. 'Ft doesn't git yer out of dis 'fore mornin', mer name ain't Shorty Junior."

"Thank yer kid," whimpered Shanks, "I know you'll do your best."

After he had gone, Shorty Junior turned to his dad, and said:

"Come 'long; we can't do no good here."

They went out together and talked over the grave situation all the way home.

"Yer go ter bed, dad," said the kid when they arrived at the hotel, "an' let me work dis ting, merself. I tink I kin fetch him, sure pop."

Shorty, after some persuasion, retired.

Then the kid sat down by himself and indulged in a hearty laugh. He ha, hawed, and wriggled, and slapped his thigh, laughed all over and enjoyed himself amazingly.

"Git me 'rested by a lot of students an' tink I never tumbled, hey? I guess not. Tel yer two could play at dat, an' now I guess yer know it."

After he had quite exhausted himself, he arose and going up stairs procured a long shabby dress, an old bonnet and a dirty shawl.

"Now fer der rescue!" he exclaimed.

Going out of the hotel, he had a talk to the clerk which caused that individual to go off into a series of grins and desperate noddings of his head.

"All right, trust me, I'll do it," he said.

Shorty Junior went straight back to the station house with his bundle, and when he entered, both he and the glum captain broke out in a roar of laughter and shook hands.

"How's der prisoner?" smiled the kid.

"Snug as a bug in a rug," chuckled the captain.

"Yer done yer part of it red-hot," cried the kid. "He never tumbled once. Les go out an' have a bottle of wine."

They adjourned to a saloon and hid the sparkling fluid from sight.

"Now, captain, yer keep yer back ter der door," said Shorty Junior, when they once more got to the lock up, "an' I'll waltz der prisoner out."

"All right, kid, go it."

The kid was conducted down stairs to Shank's cell by an officer, who, after unlocking the door, went away.

"How is yer makin' out?" asked Shorty Junior.

"Horrible!" answered Shanks, who looked as if he had been in jail for twenty years at least. "This is awful! The place is full of drunken men and howling women an' I'm darn near crazy."

"Hist!" said Chips to the shaking Yankee; "I tol' yer I'd help yer out of dis, an' I will. Git dese tings on quick 's yer kin."

He undid his bundle and got out the clothing.

"Dis is yer only show; now hurry up. I's bribed der doorman; he's goin' ter be 'sleep; an' I'll go up for yer an' chin the captain. Yer come rite after me an' scoot rite out. Don't yer stop ter look at nothin', but dig fer der hotel."

"But you, kid?"

"Never mind me; I'll tak' care merself."

Shanks got off his ulster, and soon put on the dress, bonnet and shawl.

He made the tallest and worst-looking female that ever walked, and the kid couldn't help grinning at his outlandish appearance.

When all was ready, Shorty Junior squeezed his hand, and went up stairs.

"All rite, cap," said he, "look rite out der window."

Shanks pushed up the long steps with a beating heart, cautiously opened the door, saw the sleeping officer, and at once strode across the room, and dashed out into the street.

And then the captain, the sleeping officer, now wide awake, and the kid, indulged in a prolonged roar.

"Makes der wust-lookin' female I ever see," exclaimed Chips.

"You're right, he does," said the captain.

"Much 'bliged, gents, for yer help in dis little racket. I'll do's much fer yer some day."

"All right, kid," answered the captain, still grinning.

"We'll give you a hand any time."

Shorty Junior bid them good night and followed his victim.

When he got to the hotel there was a regular row going on. He managed to slip in unperceived and hide himself in a place where he could see all that was going on.

Shanks, still in his outlandish costume, looking like an escaped lunatic, and shivering with cold and anger, strode in front of the desk, growling at the clerk.

"Darn yer, I waster go up stairs," he yelled.

"My good woman," answered the clerk, "you can't come in here. Go out, I tell you, go out!"

"By th' great gewittaker!" bawled Shanks, slamming down his fist, "I tell you I will come in."

"Go away, beggar woman, or I'll call the police!" roared the clerk, excitedly.

"I tell you I'm Shanks and I belong here. Don't you know me?"

"You're a crazy woman! Git out or I'll have you chucked out."

"I'm Shanks, I tell yer," howled that party, jumping up and down with rage. "Send for Shorty, send for the kid. I'll knock yer darn snoot off, you poor slinking galoot!"

The clerk got right up.

"Here, waiters," he yelled; "I won't be bothered this way. Fire this d—d woman out in the street."

"I ain't no d—d woman! I'm Shanks!"

Several stout night porters grabbed him, and spite of his protests and struggles, hustled him out to the sidewalk, and warned him not to come back again under the penalty of a punched head.

The kid sat behind the big warm comfortable stove, and laughed at this scene till the tears rolled down his cheeks.

"Oh, ye'll have yer uncle 'rested, will yer?" he grinned. "Guess ye'll tink twice 'bout it 'fore yer tries it on 'gin."

Then he got up, and he and the clerk had another laugh.

"Yer done dat jist's I tol' yer," said the kid, holding his sides; "couldn't be better. Dis is 'nuff fer one night; so now I reckon I'll go out an' find him an' git him ter bed."

He sailed forth, and in about five minutes he found the forlorn Shanks shivering beneath a lamp-post.

"Hello, ol' man," he exclaimed, very innocently, "where's yer bin? I's bin huntin' all over fer yer."

"Where have I been?" roared Shanks, still mad. "Been to that darn hotel, and they wouldn't let me in. Swore they didn't know me."

"Why, nobody would know yer wid dem tings on."

"Well, how am I to get in?"

"Why, tak' 'em off."

"Well, I be darn, kid, I never thought of that," said the Yankee, and he at once tore his duds from his back and threw them in the street.

Then they went to the hotel.

"Good evening, Mr. Shanks," said the clerk, as they drew near the desk; "do you know we've had such a row here! A crazy woman insisted on it that she was you, and, by Jove! I had to have her put out!"

"Well," roared Shanks, who felt cold and ugly, "the next time any woman comes here and says she's Shanks, you let her go right to my room darn quick, and don't you stop her; that's all."

"All right, of course, Mr. Shanks, if you say so," answered the clerk.

"Oh, 'tis all right, is it," thought the kid to himself, "I'll see 'bout dat ter-morrow."

The next morning the three chums sat down to the breakfast table together.

"I'll have to skip out of this town," moaned Shanks.

"What fer?" asked the kid.

"What for! Why won't that police captain be after me, and have detectives on my track, and gobble me in again?"

"Guess not."

"Guess not! Why?"

"Dem medical students what yer put up dat oder job on me wid, didn't put no 'tective on mer track."

"What!" roared Shanks, tumbling in a second, "was this one of your darn jokes?"

"Looks like it," said the kid, quietly.

"Tol' yer yer better let dat boy 'lone, exclaimed his dad.

"Well, may I be blowed up and bursted for a rotten savings bank," cried Shanks.

And then the kid and Shorty broke out in a peal of laughter, in which the Yankee, spite of himself, was forced to join.

CHAPTER XI.

BEFORE Shanks left the breakfast table he was in high good humor, and forgave the kid for giving him the grand bounce.

"Well, you darn little imp, we'll call this square," said he.

"Yer square tings putty easy fer a rounder," replied Shorty Junior, gaily.

"Not so very easy either," laughed Shanks. "That last one you gave me is only a loan."

"Oh, yer wants ter play a lone han' on me, does yer?"

"Look out yer don't shuffle yerself in trouble, Shanks," exclaimed Shorty.

"I'll cut out of it if I do," he answered.

"Well, gem'men, both, I 'vise yer ter keep a sharp look out fer der little joker," grinned the kid.

And then to himself he added:

"I tink one of yer, which his principal name is Shanks 'll git euchered 'fore bed time sure."

The pipe flowed into the show all day long as usual, and Shorty Junior was kept busy from morning till night.

But not quite so busy that he did not find time to put up a little snap for the Yankee.

The three friends went back to the hotel to dinner, and after Shorty and Shanks had finished and gone away to the show, the kid walked into the Yankee's room and opening his trunk, took out everything he could find and carted them off to his own apartment.

He didn't leave a vestige of Shanks's property behind, and when he quit the chamber, it looked as if it had suffered a severe attack of masked burglar.

Having removed the things, he carefully hid them away.

"Dis is a little 'un," he grinned; "a young feller fer a cent; someting ter make der ol' boy sleep good ter nite."

His arrangements completed, he returned to the museum and spent the afternoon and evening there.

When the show was out the three chums returned to

the hotel together, and Shanks complaining of being very tired, said he guessed he'd go to bed.

"Good nite, ol' man," exclaimed Shorty Junior. "I tink 'fore I retires, I'll 'stroy a couple of cigarettes, or so."

"I 'bleeve I'll smoke a weed 'fore I goes ter roost, too," observed Shorty.

Shanks went off up stairs, and father and son sat down before the roaring fire.

The kid said nothing, but smoked away lazily, as if half asleep.

Shanks hadn't been gone more than three minutes before he came bolting back.

He was wild, mad, excited, and looked as if something decidedly disagreeable had happened.

He came in with a rush, his hair flying all over his head, and his coat tails sticking straight out behind.

The kid winked at the clerk, and the clerk winked at him.

They evidently understood each other.

"Great Jehosafat gosh!" howled Shanks, bolting up to the counter and beginning to pound on the desk.

"Where's the police! Send for a detective!"

"Why, what's der matter?" cried both Shorty Junior and his dad, springing up at once.

"Anybody bin tryin' ter murder yer?" asked the kid.

"Murderers be hanged," bawled Shanks.

"Dat's what I say," observed Shorty. "Any man who would commit a murder—"

"Let me kiss him fer his murder," began to sing the kid. "What's der matter wid yer, anyhow?"

"Matter!" roared Shanks, wildly. "I've been robbed, plundered, cleaned out! Dozens of things gone!"

"Yer dozen say ser,"

"Robbed of every stitch of clothes! My ball costume, my money, my jewelry!"

"Did yer lose yer diming pin?" inquired the kid anxiously.

"Didn't have any to lose, fortunately," cried Shanks.

"Lose yer character?"

"Didn't have any to lose, for—you ber dam! Landlord! Landlord!" And the excited Yank stalked backward and forward.

"Where's that darn landlord? I'll make him pay for this loss, every penny of it!"

"No, you won't," said the clerk, quietly.

"I won't, yer miserable owl, why won't I?"

Again the kid and the clerk exchanged winks.

"Why, Mr. Shanks," explained the calm clerk, "didn't you say last night when you came home, that if any woman called here, and said she was Shanks, I was to send her up to your room without asking any questions?"

"Yes, I did! What of that? What of that?" roared the tearing Yankee.

"Well," went on that clerk, slowly, "a strange woman did call to-day, said she was Shanks, and I sent her up to your room, according to orders."

"Helenblazes!" howled Shanks.

"She didn't say whether she was Helen Blazes or not," observed the clerk.

Shanks was so thunderstruck that he stood there, and gazed at vacancy like a dumb man.

Had he cast his eyes to the end of the desk, he would have seen the kid indulging in a grin that threatened to engulf both his ears.

"Your own fault, Mr. Shanks," observed the clerk, slyly.

"Yes, heard yer say so merself," added the kid.

"So you see it isn't our look out," continued the clerk, innocently.

"Nary a bit," said Shorty Junior, ready to laugh outright.

"Darn the woman!" cried Shanks. "Everything's gone! What am I going to do?"

"Why don't yer trump?" naively inquired Chips.

"Trump? What for?"

"Why, if der woman's got yer clothes, yer eilder got ter follow suit or trump, ain't yer?"

"I can't go around this way," exclaimed the Yankee, peevishly, gazing at his garments.

"Never mind," feelingly remarked the kid, "if yer ain't got ner clothes left, I'll lend yer some of mine."

The idea of the tall Shanke toggled out in such a suit of duds as the kid wore made everybody smile.

"Den yer would be short of clothes wid a vengeance," laughed Shorty.

"Well," observed Chips, starting for up stairs, "der wedder's gittin' warm an' yer kin go 'round widout clothes. 'F der people don't like dat, let 'em close der eyes, den dey won't see you."

Shorty Junior went out of the office leaving the Yankee as mad as he could be, and at the same time feeling as foolish as a small boy when he is caught at his mother's sweetmeats.

Meeting a fat colored waiter in the hall he took him to his room and bringing out Shank's clothes from their hiding place he ordered him to restore them to their owner's apartment.

"All right, boss," said the darkey, who suspected nothing of course. "I gits 'em in dar in er jiffy."

Then the kid quietly went back below and taking Shanks one side he said:

"Look here, chum, something wrong goin' on in yer room, sure. I 'vise yer go up dere an' keep both eyes wide open."

This hint was enough for Shanks, who immediately bolted off up stairs, closely followed by his tormentor.

The darkey had removed an armful and was coming along the hall with another, humming a camp meeting hymn, when he and the Yankee met face to face.

One look was enough, and Shanks went for that son of Ham like a thousand of bricks.

"Yer black an' tan gorilla yer," he roared, "I've caught yer in the very act, have I?"

The darkey was as innocent as a new born babe, and he stopped, and stood grinning, evidently mistaking this for one of Shanks's little jokes.

He continued to grin for about one minute. And then he didn't. He got too busy to indulge in any such sort of eccentricities. Shanks went for him bald headed, and the way he used that off colored party up was simply surprising. He banged his head, rolled him over, walked on him; and the air was full of flying clothes and frightened darkey.

The coon finally got away from him and took to his heels, and never stopped running till he had left that hotel many blocks behind him.

"Thar, yer black rascal," bawled Shanks, as he disappeared, "if ever I ketch you foolin' with my duds again, darn me if I don't make yer think you're wrestlin' with an earthquake!"

He gathered up his things and went off to his room muttering savagely to himself, and Shorty Junior, who had been having a hearty laugh, concluded that now it was time to retire, and did so.

On the evening of the next day the much talked of ball was to take place, and everybody was in a fever of excitement.

The show was crowded as usual, and the performance was gotten through with as quickly as possible.

As soon as the last visitor was out of the house, all hands left for home to dress themselves in fancy costumes, and shortly after eleven they began to arrive at the ball-room.

"He's so big dat he had ter hire a hall ter dance in all by hisself!"

And so they went on, each fresh sally received with a roar of laughter, and the police, spite of all they could do, could neither induce them to leave or keep quiet.

If the outside of the building was brilliant and the crowd lively, within it was a hundred times more so.

Lights flashed, the air was filled with a soft perfume that arose from half a dozen fountains of cologne water, a fine band that discoursed sweet music, canary birds in cages, half smothered in flowers, piped their tuneful lays, merry dancers whirled in the giddy waltz, dashing masqueraders flashed in and out among the gay trippers of the light fantastic, while the whole scene appeared like an enchanted vision of fairy land.

The dresses were rich, the assemblage included much of the beauty and fashion of New York, and while some danced, some flirted, some sat in the boxes enjoying the rare spectacle, some played off their pranks and jokes, all seemed bent on having a jolly time generally, and taking a hand in the fun as it went round.

The kid, rigged up as a grinning monkey, was here, there and everywhere, playing his rackets and raising the deuce.

He was the very life of the ball.

Being as spry as a cat, he would suddenly bounce on a man's shoulders, give him a terrific scare by yelling

The kid had got hold of a big sign reading, DANGER! and fastened it to his unconscious victim's back.

And Parson Guppy came out strong.

He was clad in tight pants and gaiters, a seedy black coat buttoned to his throat, and wore on his head, tipped over in a jaunty manner, a dilapidated high white hat with a rheumatic-looking black band, and no rim. He didn't dance.

He hadn't any time to waste on such frivolity,

He devoted his whole attention to gathering in wine and other drinkables, and as a great many of the maskers carried flasks or little barrels strung across their shoulders with fancy ribbons, and generally filled with something good, so he was kept busy.

Dancing up to a tall French soldier he stopped him and exclaimed:

"My friend, I notice that you carry on your manly—ah—person a small article which is called, if I mistake not—eh—ah—a flask."

"Yes," was the reply.

"Sir, allow me to hope that you wear it—ah—purely as an ornament. It is, I may venture to remark—ah—empty."

"Guess not. Full er whisky."

"Heavens! Whisky! Ah, my misguided friend, touch not the, as I may call it, the—ah—intoxicating bowl. It biteth like a serpent and stingeth like a bladder."



A trap on the other side of the stage suddenly opened, and the dead man, wrapped in a white sheet, slowly rose to view.

The street was brilliantly illuminated with calcium lights, and as carriage after carriage dashed up to the grand entrance and deposited its load of living freight, the people—and curiosity to see the kid's well-known company had brought together crowds of them—pushed, crowded, cheered and laughed.

Shorty Junior and his dad of course met with an ovation, and Buster, Shanks, Guppy, Stoutlad and in fact all the rest that were known, came in for a great deal of good-natured guying.

"Dere goes der kid!" yelled someone as that popular favorite alighted.

"What character is he goin' as?"

"Der Rooshin giant!"

"He's disguised as a elephant, an' bin led in der onek way!"

"Pipe his dad tryin' ter pass hisself off as George Washington!"

"Here comes ol' Shanks! What's he go fer?"

"Goes for er dollar er nite and his grub!"

"Oh, lucker Buster! Dressed up fer er telegraph pole!"

"Oh, jist take a crack at Parson Guppy!"

"What character is he got?"

"Ain't got none!"

"He's disguised though—disguised in liquor!"

"Here come's ol' bones!"

"Hello ol' billiard cue!"

"Darn if he ain't goin' in as a shadder!"

"Ta' care, Stoutlad, yer doesn't fall through one of

der cracks in der floor!"

"Where's der giant?"

in his ear, and be off again before his victim could grasp him.

He turned up in unexpected places, rolled in and out among the dancers, didn't give anybody a minute's peace, upset people, interrupted stolen interviews in retired corners, and was laughed at, struck at, chased by men armed with stuffed clubs, who could never succeed in catching him, howled at and hidden away from.

He didn't give a snap for anybody and not only went in heels over head for fun, but was getting his money's worth and more too.

His dad was dressed as a woman with short clothes—a sort of child of the regiment; and though not so wild as his hopeful son, was having lots of fun on the sly and quiet.

Shanks bloomed out as a courtier of the olden time, and being tall and well formed, looked extremely well. He paid strict attention to the ladies, particularly to one lady who displayed a pretty foot and ankle, and whose name was—Mr. Shorty, Senior.

Buster went as a fat boy, and as there was no disguising that mountain of meat, all knew him, and he had more fun poked at him and got into more scrapes than any other man in the room.

But though he got little rest, and the sweat was pouring off him in streams, he enjoyed himself as well as anybody, and was as light on his feet as a boy.

When he danced everybody got out of the way and stood from under.

And the reason of this was very plain.

Wine leadeth to sin
As also does gin—

From my latest temperance ode. Whisky is the root of all evil. Let me extract the root."

Here he seized the flask, and before the soldier could prevent him he had emptied half its contents down his capacious throat.

"Very good sort," he observed, smacking his lips. And then he danced away light and airily in search of another "fluid" vender.

Shorty Junior had noticed his lecturer's way of spending the evening, and determined to play a joke on him.

"He is a hard nut ter crack," he thought to himself, "but bet I'll fetch him dis go if it kills him."

He got a bottle and filled it part with gin, and part with jalap.

Then he threw himself in Guppy's way.

As soon as the parson got his eye on the bottle, he promptly halted him.

"Little boy," he exclaimed, "shall I take care of the—ar—decanter, you overbalance yourself with it?"

"Not much," answered the kid in a disguised voice. "Dat's medicine."

"Little youth, I am suffering. Such pains! such aches!"

Drugs I fain would take—ar
For my body is an ache—ar—

Extract from a pill-box. I feel that medicine would revive me."

"Well, ol' pard, jist help yerself den, if dat's der case."

The kid handed him the bottle, and Guppy cleaned it out in no time, and went waltzing off.

Chips kept his eye on him for an hour after that, and still the parson was as cheerful and lively as a colt, and the dose had no more effect on him than so much water.

"Well, I'm ber darn," exclaimed Shorty Junior to his dad, whom he had ran across and knew.

"What's der matter, mer son?" asked Shorty, stopping.

"Why, dat 'ere Guppy. Can't git der racket on dat tuff ol' rooster, no how. Give him a dose of jalap an hour ago, an' now he's as solid as a bank. Didn't hurt him bit. He must have innards made of iron an' brass mounted."

Neither the kid nor his dad noticed that the party spoken of stood right behind them listening, but he was, and when he heard Chips' remarks, he simply observed, "hum," and walked off.

"Well, he is a rum 'un, dat's a fact," declared Shorty.

"A rum 'un? A Roman, an' makes rum howl!"

"Howl yer jaw," laughed Shorty.

"Of jaws I will. How is yer makin' out, dad?"

"Fust rate. Havin' heaps of fun; an' I say, kid, I've got Shanks on a reglar string."

"Yer has? How's dat? Don't he know yer?"

"No; but he wants ter, bad. He's bin dancin' wid me, an' treatin' me, an' makin' love ter me like a good feller. Tinks I's er rich man's daughter."

"He's mashed, is he?"

"Clean gone."

"I say, dad, make a 'pintment wid him fer ter-morrer, can't yer?"

"Course I kin."

"Do it, an' we'll give him a big racket."

"All rite, I will."

It will be remembered that Shorty was dressed as a woman—and a good looking woman he made too—and Shanks, not knowing that his friend was going to the ball as a female, and never once suspecting who his fair charmer really was, had actually fallen in love with him, or her, and had devoted himself to his little beauty the whole evening.

After a laugh father and son separated, the one to make his appointment with his "spoon" and then change his dress to that of a jockey, and the other to continue his rackets.

The kid found a lot of people around Stoutlad and the giant, who were dancing a sort of breakdown, and he turned a flip-flap and rolled in among them.

As he did so he managed to spill a handful of snuff on the floor.

And then he skipped.

In a minute everybody around there was sneezing as if they had concluded to go on and do that and nothing else all their lives.

"Dat'll put 'em up ter sauff," he grinned, "an' dat's snuff for me."

The ball was now in full blast and going on gaily. The fashionables who were there had never seen anything like it before, and they laughed and applauded heartily.

The fun was perhaps a little rougher than they were accustomed to, for there was nothing stuck-up about it, but it was the real genuine article; and many of them went away from there that night and acknowledged that they had never known before what good, rollicking, downright fun was.

To see the "curiosities" the fat women, the wild Indians, the cannibal, and all the rest, dance and cut up their antics, was enough to have made a dead man laugh.

Guppy was a now as gay as a lark, and still hankering for fluid.

"Hello," said he, to one of the show hands, who was masked. "Are you, so to express it—ah—fond of a decoction called—ah—whiskey?"

"Yer bet I be, ol' man," was the reply.

"Good. You know the kid of course. Go to him and tell him that—ah—Guppy, the king of his sex, and prop of the show, is—ah—dying? Remember, dying! Nothing short of that'll fetch him. Represent yourself as a doctor, and recommend that I be given whiskey! Understand? whiskey!"

"All right," said the man, and he went off and found Shorty Junior, and delivered his message, while Guppy stretched himself out on a bench to await developments.

When he saw his friend and the kid coming towards him, he began to groan and squirm as if he had convulsions.

The kid looked at him and grinned.

"Got der ol' boy at last, ber jingoes!" he thought.

"I am a doctor," said the man, who had brought him there, "an' I think your friend has been poisoned."

"Ner pizen 'bout dat," laughed Chips, and then he took the supposed physician aside and told him he had given the suffering man a dose of jalap.

"I doesn't want ter see him dat way. What's good fer him now, doctor?" asked he.

"Only one thing now to fetch him up—plenty of whisky."

The kid at once sent a boy for a bottle of rye, and requested the "doctor" to stay by his patient till he was better.

No sooner had the boy arrived with the whisky than Guppy arose as lively as a kitten, drew the cork, took hands with his friend, and the two began to drink.

The kid saw them, and walked right back.

"Dat seemed ter cure yer mity quick," he exclaimed.

"Yes, my boy," said Guppy, not at all abashed; "I overheard a little conversation between you and your most worthy—ah—progenitor. Jalap was the subject. Jalap, my dear boy! I was brought up on it."

The kid went off grinning and shaking his head.

"He bange everyting I ever see," he mused, "an' I'm

blowed if he ain't as full of rackets as he is of whisky!"

Soon after this, Guppy finding he could obtain no more "jig water," as everybody had spotted him, opened up a new idea by changing his dress to that of a female.

He was one of the sighing, loving, ogling sort.

His little plan of operations was this:

He would attract the attention of some gallant gent, first flirting, and then in conversation with him, and then when the two were finally seated, he would begin to complain of being very tired, and very, very thirsty.

The gallant would immediately, of course, propose that this supposed enslaver "take something."

He would at first be shy and hesitate, but would at last consent, reluctantly.

And order a bottle of champagne and get outside of the biggest part of it.

He was very successful at this little game till Shorty Junior happened to drop on him.

"Ho, ho! dat's yer dodge, is it?" he exclaimed. "Fi doesn't fool yer, ol' man, dis time, I'll give way two boxes of parlor matches ter der poor fust ting ter-morrer mornin'."

He procured an empty bottle, and only partly hiding it, as if he wished to conceal it, but couldn't, he threw himself in Guppy's way; and when that iron-clad fraud saw it, he thought his little boss was going to take a nip on the sly, and followed him.

Shorty Junior had noticed in his wanderings that behind the scenes on the stage, and quite out of sight, there stood a hogshead half full of water.

He skipped right along to this spot, and after looking about as if afraid of being caught, he brought out his bottle and pretended to drink.

Then after another cautious glance around he climbed up to the hogshead and dropped the bottle inside it.

This done he walked half way round the cask and hid himself.

As he had expected, he was no sooner out of sight than Guppy came bowling up and with a laugh, leaned over the hogshead to seize the hidden treasure, leaving himself half in and half out of it.

Like a flash the kid grabbed his legs, gave him a tumble and sent him to the bottom head first.

Guppy gave a yell as he felt himself going, then there was a terrific splashing of water, and his legs began to go like a windmill.

When the kid thought he had soaked long enough he caught him by the feet and dragged him out.

Then he skipped.

He left the parson sitting on the floor dripping with water and half drowned.

"Baptized, by jingoes!" cried Guppy, getting up and shaking himself. "That's more water than I've struggled with before for twenty years."

As the kid came away he noticed his fat man Buster, promenading with a lady dressed as a maid of honor. He had seen him several times before and always with the same party.

"Orter give ol' fatty a racket, sure pop," he exclaimed.

While he was thinking of one, up the lady herself came over to him and whispered.

"Mr. Shorty, how can I get rid of this awful Mr. Buster who is bothering the life out of me?"

"Want ter git rid of him?" said our hero, after a moment's reflection. "Well, I tell yer, stick rite to him for a while longer an' leave der rest ter me."

"All right," she answered, and at once rejoined the fat man.

The kid hunted around and soon found the party he was in search of—one of his friends, a medical student.

He took this man aside and told him what he wanted him to do.

"I'm the individual for that racket, every time," was the answer.

"Dat settles it!" exclaimed Shorty Junior, "dere dey go now!" pointing out Buster and the lady who were about to be seated.

"Tis well," replied his friend. "I'll go for 'em."

He strode over to the couple and tapping Buster on shoulder exclaimed fiercely, and at the same time tapping the sword he wore:

"Sir, this has been going on long enough. This lady is my wife!"

The lady, who saw the joke, gave a scream and at once hastened away.

Buster was paralyzed with fear and stood up shak-

ing. "Come with me, sir. I demand an explanation!"

He stalked off, followed by Buster who was so frightened that he hardly knew what he was doing.

The student, followed by the kid and a small party who were in the racket, went up the stage and behind the scenes.

"Now, sir," cried the student turning quickly, "I want satisfaction. Wilst fight?"

"I c—c—can't," stammered Buster.

"You must. Here is a sword," taking one from a friend and handing it to the shaking lover, "now defend yourself, for this is a duel to the death."

And then began such a fight as was never before seen.

The fat man danced around, puffed, dodged, and did his best to avoid his opponent's weapon for fully ten minutes, and then in sheer desperation he made a sudden lunge.

The student threw up his arms, dropped his sword, and with a deep groan sank down as if dead.

"Yer have killed him, sure pop," cried Shorty Junior, who now came forward.

"Kill—him! Good—gore!" gasped the demoralized Buster.

"Yes, he's all gore, an' gore-n ter. Yer struck him clean through," exclaimed the kid.

"What'll I—do?" howled the fat man.

"Do nothin'. Stay rite here till yer git a chance ter scoot out."

Even while they were talking, a trap on the other side of the stage suddenly opened, and the dead man, wrapped in a white sheet, his eyes fixed, and one hand pointing to his bleeding wound, slowly rose to view.

Buster took one look at him, and with a yell, fled from the building.

CHAPTER XII.

THE ball broke up at a very late hour, and everybody went home tired but delighted.

The kid and his dad were the last to leave, and when they struck the hotel they were pretty well played out, and went straight to bed, where they remained till late next morning.

They met at dinner, a meal they did full justice to, and after it was over, and their cigars lit, they naturally drifted into a conversation about the events of the previous evening.

"Dat shindig's a goin' to do der show a heap of good, dad," said Shorty Junior, running his eye over the morning papers. "Der dailies all got der biggest kind of notices in 'bout it."

"Dat's good," answered his dad; "make der ol' biz git up an' shuffle like a light train of cars wid two locomotives ter it."

"Dat's der sort of biz we're in 'train' fer all der while. We kin keep track of dat like a book."

"Don't joke on locomotives, kid; dem's a tender subject."

"I'll tend-er dat, yer bet. 'Sides all der daily papers, dere's der weeklies to come in ter."

"Yes, but dey generally come out weakly, don't dey?"

"Dey'll hump out strong 'nuff dis time; goin' ter put up for der ball biz, an' notice all der celebrities in full."

"If dey notices all der full celebrities, it'll take up a hull side of der paper."

"Wonder how Guppy feels dis mornin' after his duckin'?"

"Dry I'll bet."

"Spect 'f anybody drinks dat water I chucked him inter las' nite it'll make 'em drunk."

"Must be kinder hazy water, sure."

"Hey, water yer say?"

"Wonder 'f Buster tinks dat odder fellar is a dead man yit?"

"Guess he tinks ber dis time he's a dead beat."

"Spouse ye'll have ter put him on der free list now an' make him a dead head."

"Oh, by der way, dad, how did yer make out wid Shanks?"

"Bloomin'. He stood a couple of bottles of sparkle, an' wanted me ter go ter supper wid him. But I didn't sup."

"I suppose not. Did yer make an apintment ter meet him?"

"Yes I did, sure!"

"Dat's bully."

"He was ser perllite wid me ter; but we'll put him in a box, hey?"

"Yes. Show him he ain't a Chesterfield."

"Better put mustard on yer chest 'f yer got 'em dat bad."

"Where did yer 'gree ter meet him?"

"Ter Skeys' Hotel."

"Who'd he tink yer was?"

"Tol' him mer name was Fanny Dancer, an' he's took me for a rich man's daughter, an' wants to 'lope wid mer. Don't yer envy him?"

"Doesn't envelope for a cent. When is dis ting goin' to eventuate?"

"At eight, ter—morer evenin'. Have yer fixed a racket?"

"Not yit. Let's amble down ter der show an' we'll talk it over."

They threw away their stumps, and donning hats and coats, started off.

When they arrived at their place of destination they found it fairly overflowing with people.

And every other one they met they overheard talking about the ball.

Business was more than rushing and the "curiosities" never looked nor acted better.

Buster had found out that he had been badly sold on the dead man, but he never suspected the kid for a moment.

Talking it over with that sly imp, he exclaimed, puffing away as hard as ever, and mopping the perspiration from his brow.

"Ever meet—run across d—d rascal—fall on him—Kill him! beat him, pound him!"

"Yes," laughed Shorty Junior, "Seven hundred pound him."

Parson Guppy was at his post, pretty full of "ben-

zine" and as gay as a lark.

"See me take to the—ah—water last night?" he asked the kid, as if it was quite a natural pursuit for him to have been engaged in.

"I was gazin' rite at yer," grinned Chips. "Went in head-ust."

"Yes. Hogs-head first."

"Yer looked when yer come out 's 'f ye'd crawled thro der bung-hole."

"I did feel rather—ah—bun-ge-d up."

"When yer let out dat whoop I s'pose yer was loopin' ter ketch on der hoops."

Guppy mused for a moment, and then replied:

"If I—ah—catch any cold from it, I suppose, after that, it will be the—ah—whooping cough."

Everybody was feeling jolly after the night's jamboree but Shanks.

He appeared to be nervous and anxious—looked as if

he was impatient for that to-morrow night to come and spread her sable mantle and things around.

And, indeed, so he was.

The long Yankee was very susceptible in all affairs of the heart, and the little beauty—as he fondly imagined Shorty to be—that he had made love to the night before, occupied all his thoughts.

She was rich; he loved her and she loved him; and he was to meet her on the morrow.

He hadn't seen his darling's face—of course Shorty had been careful not to remove his mask—but that she was handsome he was certain, and he longed to be in Miss Fanny Dancer's company once more.

Before the show was over Shorty Junior left and went up to Skeys' Hotel, to see how the land lay for a racket.

It panned out beautiful. He not only knew the landlord himself, but as luck would have it, the lady that Buster had fallen in love with at the ball, and fought the duel about, resided in the same place.

When the kid saw her, he wasn't five minutes arranging his plan of operations.

He told her what he wanted her to do, and she fell in with the humor of the joke at once, and promised her aid.

"Member," said Shorty Junior, "fer der time bein' yer Miss Fanny Dancer, an' 'f yer git any letters from Shanks, be sure an' answer 'em."

She agreed to do so, and the kid, after taking a survey of the premises, left.

"'F' doesn't give him der grandest bounce he's had in a year I'll let in a deadhead to der show every day nex' week," he mused on his way back. "'F yer doesn't want ter git bit, leave der members of der Shorty family 'lone."

That evening, when he got a chance to speak to his dad, he took him one side and explained things.

"It's all rite 'bout dat racket," he exclaimed.

"Did yer fix her up?"

"Couldn't be better."

"How yer goin' ter work it?"

"Never yer mind. Yer be dare to-morrer night at eight, sharp, and ye'll git a front seat an' a free pass ter der performance."

"I'll be dere; wouldn't miss it for a house and lot."

All next day Shorty Junior was kept too busy to attend to rackets, but in the evening he was ready for any fun that might turn up.

Ever since the ball Shanks had been in a dreamy sort of state, and now that the night had come he was fussy and more nervous than ever.

He was togged out in his best store clothes, had had his hair carefully dressed by a barber, and wore in his buttonhole a fancy bouquet.

At seven o'clock he spoke to the kid.

"I'll have to be away this evening, Chips," he said.

"Very important business, I assure you."

"Good gracious!" exclaimed the kid, as if very much vexed. "Go 'way ter-night? Doesn't see how in der deuce I's goin' ter git 'long widout yer."

"Friend sick," explained Shanks. "Ain't expected to live."

"Oh, if dat's der case, go it."

Shanks gave one more curl to his hair, tipped his beaver on one side, secured his cane and started.

"Now for Miss Fanny Dancer," he cried.

As soon as he was out of the show Shorty Junior called to his old man.

"Come 'long, dad, der ball's up, an' der door's open."

"All rite, mer son. We'll lay der Yank out cold."

Shanks dashed along at a rapid rate, swinging his cane airily and dreaming of joys to come.

He piled into Skeys' Hotel and inquired for his charmer.

"Ah, Dancer," said the polite clerk, "second floor, front room. I'll send up your card."

The pasteboard was dispatched, and after a few moments waiting, he was invited to ascend.

"At last," he murmured, as he mounted the stairs.

He was shown into a splendidly-furnished apartment, and a lady who had been sitting before a cheerful fire arose as he bowed himself in.

One hasty glance at that face and Shanks was enraptured. She was all his fancy had painted her and more too.

His heart was no longer his own, and he was prepared to make a most egregious ass of himself at a moment's notice.

"Charming companion of the ball," he exclaimed, advancing and seizing her shapely hand; "Fanny, may I call you thus?"

She blushed divinely, and he proceeded:

"Ever since I first met you your image has filled my soul. I have thought of you day and night; dreamed of you—worshipped you! Oh! how I have longed for this hour!"

The lady appeared very much agitated and motioned him to a seat.

He was clean gone, and instead of sitting down he dropped on his knees, and again grasped her hand.

"My own! my darling! listen to me. Let me linger over this! Let me be your slave!"

"This must not go on," cried the lady, trying to withdraw her hand. "It is folly; it is madness!"

"Dearest Fanny, I love you! I adore you! Let us fly together!"

"It cannot, cannot be!" she exclaimed passionately, withdrawing her hand and clasping it to her heart.

"Cannot be! Why? I love you for yourself alone. I will marry you!"

"Never! Do you not know?"

"Know what, dearest? Speak."

"I am the wife of another!"

Shanks got straight up off his knees and looked at her in blank surprise.

"What!" he cried. "Married to another!"

"Oh!" went on the lady, wildly wringing her hands, "I was foolish! I did not think you would come.

Married? Yes, married to a man I hate! A jealous madman! Oh, sir, go away and forget me."

"Alas! I cannot."

"If my husband should return. Think of me—think of yourself. He is a perfect demon when angered, and already three men have fallen by his rash hand. Leave me ere it be too late."

She suddenly stopped, listened like a frightened bird, and then uttered a faint cry.

"'Tis he! I hear his footsteps on the stairs! He comes! My husband! Oh, fly, fly!"

She was a consummate actress and couldn't have played her part better.

Shanks felt his hair beginning to get up, and he quickly started for the door, while the lady as quickly dragged him back.

"For heaven's sake, not that way; you will meet him face to face! No more blood! no more blood!" she murmured hoarsely.

"What th' deuce will I do?" asked Shanks, helplessly.

"Hide somewhere! Hide!"

"Yes, but where?"

"In here!" she cried, opening the door of what seemed to be a closet. "Quick, quick! He comes!"

It was a very small place, but, as it was all that offered, the Yankee crowded himself into it as best he could.

The lady at once closed, and, Shanks was sure, locked the door.

As she did so she turned and saw Shorty Junior and his dad standing in the doorway.

They had witnessed the whole scene, and their faces were one broad grin.

"Yer did dat as good as der best actress in New York could have done it," whispered the kid to Fanny.

"Thank you," replied she, below her breath, very much pleased at the success of her part of the racket.

"Now yer got him in der closet, what yer goin' ter der with him?" asked Shorty.

"Dat ain't ner closet," replied the kid, with a comical smile, "dat's an elevator dat runs down ter der kitchen. Yer jist lay low, der fun ain't commenced yit."

He beckoned to the landlord, who was waiting in the hall, to come in and go through his part of the performance.

He was a large, heavy man, and he strode into the room, slammed the door to with a bang, and flung himself on a chair.

"Fanny!" he exclaimed in a deep, angry tone, "as I came up the stairs, I was certain I heard a man's voice in here. Remember, three dead! By heavens, girl, do not make me add to the number!"

Shanks could hear this as plain as if the door that hid him from view was wide open, and the thoughts of this blood-thirsty ruffian of a husband made him quake.

"By Jove!" he thought. "If I ever git out of this alive, I'll never speak to another woman as long as I live. I vow I won't."

"Have you been quite alone, Fanny?" went on the supposed husband sternly.

Shanks, who was listening, expected to hear her say "yes," of course, but to his dismay she replied:

"No!"

"Ha!" cried the husband—and Shanks could hear him spring to his feet—"Say you so? Who has been here? A man?"

"Yes."

"Yes? Where is he now? Gone?"

"No!"

Shanks' heart went away down in his boots at this, and he gave himself up for dead.

"Where is the monster?"

"In that closet!"

The words came out slow, clear and distinct. And the unfortunate Yankee uttered a deep groan—that made those in the room grin—as he expected to be dragged out and shot dead in another moment.

But to his surprise no attempt was made to dislodge him and the man's tones at once changed from the deep tragic to the light and playful.

"You don't say, Fan that you've got another one?"

"Yes, I do."

"And in the old spot once more?"

"He's in the trap now I tell you."

Shanks suddenly remembered that when he was hurried in his place of concealment the lady had locked the door on him, and thinking of this he was filled with a new dread.

"Does he look like a rich chap?" he heard the man ask. "Is he a swell with lots of sugar?"

"He's one of the bosses of the big show. I met him at the ball; and if he ain't lined with greenbacks I'll miss my guess."

"Good. We'll fix him in the old way; hey, Fan?"

"Dead men tell no tales!" was the answer.

At these words Shanks shook all over—as did the kid and his dad, too, but for quite another reason—for he realized that he had been enticed into a death-trap by a pretty woman.

That he would be foully murdered and robbed he felt certain, and his case would be another to add to the long list of mysterious disappearances.

Horrible thoughts of Sweeney Todd flashed through his distracted mind, and he set up a loud cry for aid.

"Murder! murder! Help! help!" he shouted.

He struggled violently considering his limited space, and tried to burst open the door; but it resisted all his efforts.

As he was about to make one last rally for liberty, he felt himself going—at first slowly, and then rapidly—down, down, down!

"To some horrible underground den!" he gasped.

"There to be butchered. Oh, for a knife or a pistol. Help! Help! He—"

He suddenly came to a stand still, the door flew open, and he rolled out into a kitchen.

A dozen strapping female servants stood around, armed with dirty brooms, wet mops, tongs, dish water

and other useful and handy domestic utensils, and the moment he appeared they went for him, in a body, hot and heavy.

"Ye'll come here ter run away wid a lady, will ye?"

"Yer want'er elope, is it?"

"Give it till the blaggard!"

"Bate the head off him!"

And the women, all bribed by the kid to do the job, fired water on Shanks and beat him till he was almost blinded.

He fought his way out after a while, and dirty, panting and covered with slops, he took to his heels and got out of that hotel quicker than lightning.

The kid and his party laughed till their sides ached over Shanks' misadventure, and after the mirth had somewhat subsided, they adjourned to the dining room where they partook of a nice little supper that had been ordered.

"By the way, Mr. Shorty," said the lovely Fanny, her face wreathed in smiles, "my sighing swain wrote me several secret little notes. Would you like to see them?"

"Couldn't suit mer better," answered the kid, who immediately spotted another racket. "Will yer lend 'em ter me?"

"You are quite welcome to them I am sure," replied Fanny, handing him the precious documents.

The kid glanced over them and with a grin stored them safely away in his pocket.

"I'll give der ol' man nudder bounce wid dese," he grinned, "see 'f' doesn't."

The lunch finished, the merry party separated, and it being still early, Shorty Junior and his dad returned to the show.

Nothing was seen of Shanks until the next morning at breakfast.

He looked glum and sullen, and the only thing that gave him any comfort was the thought that neither of his chums knew a word about his scrape.

The meal was eaten in comparative silence, and after Shorty and Shanks had finished and gone, the kid stole up to the Yankee's room and just as he had expected found all of Fanny's answers in the pocket of the coat Shanks had worn the night before.

He seized on them at once and placed them along with the other letters he already had.

Before going to the show he called on his friends, the lively students, and explained to them the nature of his new joke.

After a long chin and a hearty laugh, all the correspondence was left in their hands, and the kid took his departure.

He got talking with Shanks in the afternoon and with his dry jokes and quaint remarks managed to restore him to something like good humor.

"Isay ol' man," he exclaimed, after they had been conversing some little while, "got er big lay-out fer ter nite; want ter take it in?"

"What is it?" asked the Yankee.

"Goin' ter try a chap before der board of medical students. All der boys goin' ter be dere an' we'll have oceans of fun."

"Who is the victim?"

"Reglar soft, tall galoot dat never tumbles once. He's a duffer an' we got der dead wood on him bad. Will yer go over?"

"Darn me if I don't take that in. Let me know when you start."

"All rite, mer son. Dere's millions in it."

As soon as he could get away, Shorty Junior interviewed his dad.

"Got him again, pop," he exclaimed.

"Who? Shanks? Is he goin' ter go?"

"Yes indeed. Walked rite inter der snags wid his eyes wide open."

"Good. I mus' take dat in sure's gun."

After the show had closed that evening the trio started for the headquarters of the students.

All the way over they were full of chin about the fun they were going to have, and by the time they got there even Shanks was as gay as a lark.

They entered the building and went straight to the students' room.

It looked much as it did when Shorty Junior had first entered it, excepting that the lights were turned up brilliantly and the skeletons kept out of sight.

The whole company were assembled, and they were as jolly a crowd as could be found in the town.

Shorty Junior was received with three cheers and a tiger, and then the business of the evening began.

Just as Shanks was about to be seated, he was seized by the gang and conducted to the lower end of the table.

"Darn it, what does this mean?" he asked, in surprise.

"It means," exclaimed the president, "that you, Mr. Shanks, are a prisoner and about to be tried."

Shanks at this piece of information, looked so stunned and dismayed that the whole company roared in chorus.

"Why, I thought," cried the Yankee, turning to the kid, "I thought you said they were going to try a reglar soft galoot that never tumbled."

"Ser, I did. Yer is the galoot alluded t'er. Yer nev' tumbled, did yer?"

"Yes, but I don't understand this, that I am

am I going to be tried for?"

"Gentlemen be seated," commanded the president.

"You are to be tried before this high court, Mr. Shanks, on a very grave charge."

He paused, and unrolling a large scroll, he hung it against the wall.

It read: "The Court of Oysters and Trimmings."

"Justice," he continued, grandly "has now gripped her scales, and the court is open."

"Well," said Shanks beginning to get mad, "I'm darned if I know what you're driving at, if I do I'm a lobster. What is the crime, anyhow?"

"You are charged with trying to abduct a young lady from her home, and marry her against her will." The moment Shanks caught the full meaning of the above, he turned as pale as if he had been wrestling with a ghost.

The secret that he had imagined he had kept so well, was known, and he was ready to sink through the floor with shame and rage.

If he could have ran away, he would; for he knew he would come in for a terrible coddling, and never hear the last of it.

He was like a certain little boy, and hadn't a word to say.

"You shall have a fair trial," went on the bland president, "before twelve good men and true, and may heaven have mercy on your soul."

And then the trial began and proceeded in due form.

A prosecuting attorney was appointed, as was also a lawyer to defend the prisoner. The president constituted himself the judge, and twelve grinning students acted as jurors.

And such questions were asked and such replies given, such badgering of witnesses, and settling of knotty legal points by the judge, as never before was heard in any court in the world.

Shorty was the first one called on to testify.

He, with a serious face, swore that he was the identical lady that the prisoner had tried to induce to elope with him.

When Shanks heard this part of the testimony his eyes almost started from his head.

"What! was you the little daughter of the regiment?" he gasped.

"Dat was der sorter daughter I was dat evenin'," was the reply.

"You daughter been ashamed of yourself," put in Shanks' lawyer.

And then Shorty went on to tell all that the Yankee had said to him, and a great deal of what he had never dreamed of saying at all, answered and asked queer questions, wrangled with the lawyers, and finally stepped down, the judge and jury roaring with laughter.

All of Shanks' letters and also Miss Fanny's replies were put in as evidence against the prisoner.

The following is a fair sample of the whole, and it is almost needless to say that the reading of them was received with many ahs! and ohs! and yum, yum, yums.

"MY DEAREST FANNY:

How the moments drag! Away from your sweet presence I am wretched. Do you love me as much now as you did last night? Oh, my darling angel, do not fail to meet your loving and distracted SHANKS."

The kid howled with glee over these readings, and poor Shanks didn't know where to hide his head.

He stormed and fumed and swore, but they kept him right there and made him listen.

The kid himself went on the stand and according to his evidence the prisoner was the greatest monster unhung.

He swore that of his own personal knowledge, he, the prisoner, had brought ruin and desolation to half a dozen families, and the fanciful account he gave of the attempted abduction kept the court in a roar.

When Shanks found out that his love-making to Miss Dancer and her seeming willingness to be loved in return, was all a put up job, a racket of the kid's, he was mad enough to have eaten that young monkey up.

Both lawyers made brilliant and witty speeches, the judge delivered a grave charge, and the jury, without leaving their seats found the prisoner guilty.

And the sentence of the court was that Mr. Shanks be fined oysters and trimmings for the gang.

CHAPTER XIII.

The announcement of the penalty for Shanks' crime was received with a hearty roar of laughter.

When it had somewhat subsided the forlorn Yankee rallied, and made a few remarks.

He forgave the boys for giving him the grand bounce, promised the kid and his dad to bear them in mind and get good and hunk on them in the future, and ended by saying:

"Gentlemen, I'll stand the oysters and trimmings, which I calculate means wine—like a little man; and the next time you catch me foolin' with a strange female, just let me know it."

"Come long wid me some evenin'," grinned Shorty Junior, "an' I'll introduce yer to Miss Fanny Dancer. You'll fin' her a charmin' young lady I bet."

"No more in mine."

"Goin' ter let the dancers skip, is yer? Won't know der lady hey? Can't polka off on yer for a cent."

"Shanks is bin ter forward to wid dat gal 'ready," exclaimed Shorty.

"And paid the penalty," cried the president.

"Yes," said the kid, "kinder balanced ter his partner. an' now I tinks we'd better all han's arown' der corner for dem oysters."

Just as they were preparing to sally forth, the door suddenly opened, and a stranger entered.

He was a short, thick-set man, with a determined look, and in his hand he carried a revolver.

"Don't let a soul attempt to quit the place!" he ordered. "You are all prisoners."

Then turning, he spoke to someone in the hallway, and half a dozen policemen with drawn clubs filed in to the room.

They were real officers—there wasn't the slightest doubt about that—and that they meant business was equally plain.

The students looked hard at Shorty Junior, evidently thinking this must be one of his rackets, and he looked equally hard at Shanks, wondering if the Yankee was going for hunk already.

"Is this a sell, Shorty?" asked the president.

"Well," was the answer, "by der looks of der officers, I guess it'll be a cell 'fore we're done wid it."

"Can't throw any light on the subject?"

"It's jist as much in der dark as yer is. What's der meanin' of dis, gemmen?" he asked, turning from the president to the policemen. "What's 'sh all 'bout?"

"It means," said the first comer, "that your secret is known. Your gang has been tracked, and a liberal dose of Sing Sing will be used to break it up."

"Know 'bout 's much now as I did 'fore yer began ter chuck chin. Got any more solid chunks of information stored 'way where yer got der las' from?"

"You'll sing a different tune before you get out of this snap."

"Cer-tune-ly we will. Sing Sing, hey?"

"A detective has been piping off this gang for a long time and you can make up your minds that you are goners. Come, men, seize your prisoners and take them to the station-house. Two of you remain here and search the premises."

The students could make neither head nor tail of all this, and each one secretly thinking that it must be a racket of Shorty Junior's, prepared to accompany the officers quietly, and see the end of it.

As for the kid himself, he couldn't understand the thing at all; but as long as it was an adventure of some kind he was satisfied.

The crowd was marched solemnly off, and soon safely landed in the lock-up.

The captain of the precinct was there, but the kid had never seen him before and knew nothing about him.

He was a stern-looking man, and he at first eyed the crowd with a suspicious look; but as they were an entirely different lot of people from what he had expected to see, he seemed considerably puzzled and began scratching his head.

Then he called one or two of the policemen up and after talking to them a few minutes he shook his head and said, "Well, well; we'll see."

The boys had kept very quiet waiting to see how the thing was going to turn out, but when the captain ordered the officers to "guard the prisoners well," they began to think that they had tumbled into a pretty serious scrape.

"Cap," said the kid, stepping to the front, "what der deuce is dis all 'bout?"

"Keep quiet. We will first take your names."

He seized a pen and opening a big book began to write.

"Well, sir," said he to the kid, suddenly looking up. "What might your name be?"

"It might be Tumatus Hairoil, but it tain't, not fer a scent."

"No levity, sir; your name?"

"Am I 'bliged to give it?"

"Certainly."

"Well fi must, I must," he exclaimed, striking a tragic attitude. "He who steals mer purse grabs cash; but he dat takes mer good name must put it down as Henry Ward Beecher!"

The captain's face relaxed. "Are you that gentleman?" he asked.

"Dat's me all der time."

The name was duly entered, and then the captain turned to Shorty.

"Wants mer name, does yer?" said that individual, "Well, I kinder hates ter give it away ter first class society, but 'f yer must know, I'm General Grant."

And so the names were taken one after another. Tecumseh Sherman, Evarts, Daniel Webster, Lester Wallack, Jim Blaine, and numerous others.

The captain put them all down, and as he wrote he grinned from ear to ear. This part of the proceedings over, the charge against the distinguished company was made known.

Enticing or kidnapping people into their dens for the purpose of robbery and murder.

This announcement was received with a roar of laughter, and before it was over, the two officers who had been left to search the place entered.

They were both the greenest kind of green hands, the one an Irishman, and the other a Dutchman.

"Well," said the captain, "what did you find?"

Both began talking at once and nearly got in a row about who should tell his story first.

The Dutchman was stopped, and the Irishman went on:

"Be gob," he cried, "it's th' devil's own howl. There does be skelekons an' skulls all around; an', captain, darlin', a dead body wid der head an' wan leg cut off."

"Does vas von horrible places," broke in the Dutchman; "pleod an' bones all over dere. I pet dere vas some more murders dere vat you could count out vonst!"

"This is becoming serious," exclaimed the captain, his face again growing set and hard.

"Nothin' very serious 'bout it," explained Shorty Junior going to the desk. "Where dese ter men is bin is up ter der Medical College, an' der body dey seen is er subject. Dese gemmen is all studyin' medicine, an' mischief, an' dey has a lively lark up dere putty often. Now, dat's der hull bizness."

"That may be so, Mr. Beecher," answered the captain with a sly wink; "indeed I haven't any doubt but it is; nevertheless I am obliged to hold you till morning. Officers, take the gentlemen below."

All the crowd was taken down but the kid. He was called back by the captain.

"You folks will have to spend the balance of the night with me," he said; "but as I have given orders not to lock you up, and to get you anything you may want. I guess you won't be so very uncomfortable after all."

"Much 'bliged fer dat," answered the kid.

"This is quite a little scrape yer have get yourselves in, Shorty, as I know you even if you don't me."

"Tell us 'bout it, captain. I's steerin' in the dark. First I tort it was all a joke."

"No joke about it. It seems some time ago, you told a young man that you had been seized in the street, thrust into a carriage and carried to a large building where a gang of men tried to rob you; but the place taking fire, you escaped."

"Dat's ser. I did tell a man dat. A tall young feller."

"That's the one. He was stopping at the same hotel at the time. He has been on the track of this gang ever since. Several times he has seen men taken in there."

"Dat's ser, ter, guess. Der boys is allers givin' some snoozer der racket."

"He, somehow, got secret information that the band was to meet to-night, and having made a formal charge, we raided the place. I thought from the way the man talked that he had actually dropped on a pretty big thing."

"I member der chap well, now. He got me ter tell de story over der second time ter, an' went inter all der details. He tol' me den dat he was a private 'ective an' promised ter trace der hull ting out. I hasn't seen him nor tort of him from dat day ter dis."

Shorty Junior laughed heartily when he learned the real state of the case, and he and the captain indulged in a long talk, during the course of which the kid told him about the numerous rackets the students had indulged in, at the recital of which the captain was highly amused.

At length the kid went down stairs and joined his friends.

He soon made known to them why they were in quod and they took it as a big joke, and resolved to enjoy themselves as best they could and make a night of it.

They bribed the doorman to bring them in lunch, liquors and cigars, and began to eat, drink, smoke and be merry.

They cracked jokes, made speeches, sang rattling songs with stunning choruses, tried all the prisoners that were locked up in the cells, and promised to speak to the mayor of the city, and get them out the first thing in the morning, marched up and down to the beating of tin pans and cups, and the rattling of locks, imitated barn-yard fowls, howled, laughed—in fact, made the night hideous; and right glad were the police to get rid of the noisy crew shortly after daylight.

Then they were marched down to court, and turned into the "pen" along with the bummers, thieves, tramps, and howling drunkards.

The first thing the kid discovered was that he was very well acquainted with the judge on the bench.

This made him solid, and insured a speedy release.

And then he saw the accuser—the amateur detective; He recognized him in a moment; and the young fellow looked as important as if he had just succeeded in rooting out every vestige of crime in New York.

This is about the way the trial was conducted:

When the case was called the judge was as gruff as a bear, and from his actions one would have thought that the party would have got the extreme penalty of the law at least.

He had evidently been out over night with the boys, and was paying the usual price of a swelled head in the morning.

He was nervous, morose, gloomy and snappish, and had been bouncing the prisoners one after another.

When he looked up and saw the kid, his face underwent a change. He first looked surprised, and then smiled a broad smile.

"Hello, Shorty," he exclaimed; "how do you feel this morning?"

"Couldn't feel jollier, judge. How does yer feel yer-self?"

The judge didn't answer, but he put both hands up to his head, as much as to say: "Look at the size of this."

"Beer or sparkle?" asked the kid.

"Both. How is your father?"

"Tip-top. Dere he is. See him?"

"Ah! I didn't notice him. Good morning, Shorty Senior."

"Mornin', judge," grinned Shorty.

"By the way," said the judge, turning to the kid, "I'm mighty glad you have called over here. My folks have been boring me for tickets for the show—got any with you?"

"Lots of 'em. How many yer want, judge?"

"Oh, give me half a dozen of 'em. I say, what brings you over here so early, anyhow?"

"Rested las' nite."

"Yes, sir," spoke up one of the officers who now got an opportunity to get a word in, "arrested on a charge of—"

"That'll do, that'll do. I haven't time to listen to it now; good day, Mr. Shorty; call over and see me some evening. What is all this crowd?"

"Dat's der gang," laughed the kid.

"Well, well, let 'em get out of this place as soon as they can. Don't block the wheels of justice, gentlemen; move along lively now, lively. Clerk, call the next case."

The amateur detective had been hanging on the outskirts vainly trying to catch the eye of his honor.

At the summary disposal of what he regarded as the greatest case in the world, he looked the perfect picture of blank astonishment.

But he wasn't to be fooled in that way.

Jumping in the witness box, he hammered loudly and demanded to be heard.

"What is the charge?" cried the judge.

"Robbery and murder!" shouted the detective. "I charge those men with being a band of cutthroats! I have been a bound on their track! Detain them! Seize them! They are villains of the deepest dye!"

"That'll do, that'll do!" roared the judge who was now mad once more.

He motioned to a policeman who immediately

grabbed the detective, and spite of his struggles, dragged him from the witness stand and landed him in the prisoner's box.

"You got in the wrong place, young man," observed his honor, with a grim look.

"They are thieves! Assassins! They run a den——"

"That's quite enough, young man," said his honor, with a nod. Then turning to the clerk he asked:

"What is the charge?"

"Drunkness," was the answer.

"Ah, I thought so. Young man, you have been going it too strong. Take my advice and reform. In order to give you a splendid chance to do so, I will commit you for thirty days."

"But it ain't me, d—m it! I'm the——"

"Thirty days, sir! Officer, remove the prisoner."

The judge's face looked like a young thunder cloud, while that amateur detective was quickly hustled off out of sight.

Whether he was really sent up or not the kid didn't stop to see, and roaring with laughter he and his party quitted the room.

After a parting "smile" all around, they separated, the students going one way and Shorty Junior, his dad and Shanks striking out for the hotel.

"Dat was a pretty lively racket, dad," said the kid, as the party, after a good bath sat down to the breakfast table.

"Yes, kept tings movin' radder lively, dat's fact."

"Too much station house in it," grinned Shanks, who was now in a good humor.

"But it wasn't stationary fer all dat," remarked the kid.

"It wasn't station-nary, either," exclaimed Shanks.

"Dat joke's extraordi-nary," laughed Chips.

"Dat's great justice dey serves out in dat court," said Shorty.

"Justice I likes it, yer bet," replied the kid.

And so they kept it up till the meal was over, when they left for the show.

Shorty Junior had got up a new sensation.

A public startler.

He had secured the services of an Italian gentleman, a Mr. Blunderin, who performed numerous daring feats that set the whole town agog.

The kid had had a large wire rope stretched from the top of his own building to one opposite, and almost every afternoon Blunderin would cross and recross on it several times.

He was called the king of the air, and certainly did his business in such a manner as to leave no room for complaint.

He used no balance-pole, and would walk the rope backward and forward, blindfolded, or in a sack, sometimes carried a man over on his shoulders, and would dance, sit down, in fact, make himself perfectly at home on his lofty perch.

His appearance never failed to draw a vast crowd, who would stand and gaze at him in open mouthed wonderment while he was going through his seemingly reckless antics, and they never forgot after he had finished and made his bow to applaud him heartily.

Blunderin proved to be a big card, and drew many people to the show, for they argued in this way:

If Shorty Junior can afford to give such an exhibition as this outside free of cost, it must be worth any man's money to see what he has going on within.

And his place was crowded day and night.

"Mus' keep der ol' pot bilin,' dad," said the kid, after he had got the thing working, "an' never let der public forget dat yer is on han' all der time."

"Dat's der only way ter do a big show bizness sure's yer live," answered Shorty. "Couldn't never induce Guppy to walk across up dere."

"Yes yer could."

"How?"

"Tie a gallon of whisky on der udder end of the rope an' he'd go for it, I bet."

"What's der rope made of? Wire ain't it?"

"Yes, why?"

"Cause, if ever dat Blunderin tumbles, he'll have a most violent fall."

"Wire yer slingin' out such bad jokes?" grinned the kid. And then father and son went out doors to take a look at the performance which was just about coming off.

When the rope was first stretched it called forth numerous remarks.

"Isay, Bill," asked one, "what's all dis about?"

"Dunno; guess Shorty Junior is goin' ter bang out or hanger on der outer wall."

"Dat's a short cut for him to git home quick."

"No 'taint; ol' man Buster's goin' ter walk on dat an' dance er hornpipe."

This latter remark gave the kid an idea; and one day after the crossings had been going on for a week or more, he had Blunderin disguise himself as the fat man, and walk over the wire.

He was so high up that he wasn't detected, and Buster was congratulated by press and public upon having accomplished a most perilous undertaking.

"I was certain—could do it," Buster used to say to visitors after this, at the same time indulging in a heavy wind; "bound to, you know—or Buster rib."

Besides the tight rope show, about three times a week, Blunderin would make a balloon ascension from the roof of the museum.

As soon as he would get under way, he would do a really fine trapeze act, and being well up in the air, many a man and woman shivered with fear, least he should lose his hold and fall.

He could be seen from one end of the city to the other, and people used to crowd the streets to look at him.

And there was a nice bit of humbug about this, too.

When he would get away up high, he would do a second trapeze act, with a stuffed figure made to represent himself.

He lowered this "man" from the balloon with a long

rope, and then the frightful feats he would make him go through would appall the stoutest hearts.

All this of course was the biggest kind of an advertisement for the show, and kept the place packed continually.

As quite a number of the dresses worn by the living curiosities had become soiled, Shorty Junior resolved to rig them all out anew.

He put the whole matter in the hands of Shanks.

"Fix 'em up, red-hot ol' man," he said, "an' make 'em look nobby. Dis dress dey got is *disdressin'*."

"All right," answered Shanks, "I'll make 'em look so sweet that all the ladies will fall in love with 'em."

"Go 'head; fix 'em ter suit yerself, an' send der bills ter me."

Shanks bought cloth, trimmings, in fact all the materials, and after having the clothes cut out, gave the work to a lot of women to sew.

He wanted buttons; and the kid overheard him bargaining with a dealer who had called on him.

The price was settled satisfactorily, and then they began to talk about the quantity.

"I am in need of a good many," said Shanks, picking up a bundle of them which had been brought as a sample. "Let me see; these are grosses."

"Yes," answered the dealer, looking at the bundle, "grosses."

"Lend me about a dozen of 'em," ordered Shanks.

"All right," said the dealer and departed.

"Course it's all rite," thought the kid to himself.

"Fi doesn't sling out a racket to dat Yank on dis, I see a sojer hoss."

He went straight to a printer's and had a lot of circulars struck off, reading as follows:

"Sir:—Being in want of a large quantity of goods in your line, you will oblige me by calling at my hotel to-morrow morning at eight o'clock for an interview. Please bring with you a sample of——and inquire for

SHANKS.

"St. Peters Hotel, B'way."

He filled in the blank space left with flour, sugar, coffee and everything else in that way he could think of, and this done, he mailed them to different grocery-men.

"Bet I'll have him half crazy over dis," he mused, as he posted the last circular, "an' he won't know what ter make of it, nieder."

Bright and early next morning the first groceryman arrived at the hotel, and asked for Shanks.

"Ain't up yet," was the answer.

"He wanted to see me on business."

"I'll call him."

A servant was sent up with the message, and after banging at Shanks' door for five minutes, he was admitted.

"What th' deuce is th' row?" asked the Yankee, only half awake.

"Man down stairs ter see yer."

"Tell him to go to the devil, and come again in an hour."

By the time the waiter got back, a dozen more men had arrived, and they were all inquiring for Shanks.

Again the waiter was dispatched up stairs to hurry Shanks down.

"What th' deuce is the matter now?" roared that party who hated to be disturbed from his bed.

"Hull loter men waitin' ter see yer."

"Well, gosh darn it, tell 'em I'll be down in a moment."

By the time the man got back this hitch, men, all looking for Shanks, came pouring in so fast that they couldn't be counted.

They were a queer appearing lot of people, too, having a floury look about them, and smelling strongly of stale vegetables.

Each one carried a fair-sized parcel under his arm, while they cast suspicious glances at each other, every man of them clamoring to get at Shanks at once.

Shorty Junior was there, his face one broad smile.

In talking with different ones in the party, he told some that Shanks was about to open a large hotel, to others he explained that the advertiser was buying for a new co-operative society, and to others that the goods were wanted for the natives of the interior of Africa.

His news spread rapidly through the crowd, and each one thought he was sure of a sale.

When Shanks finally appeared, the kid pointed him out, and exclaimed:

"Dere's yer man, now. Go fer him!"

And that gang of grocerymen did.

They surrounded the Yankee in a moment, and all began pushing, and crowding, and talking.

Shanks got mixed up in a minute, and couldn't understand what they were driving at.

"I was here first!" bawled one. "Talk ter me."

"Jist cast yer eye on this coffee——"

"In the way of pepper, I can show you——"

"Now, beans. About how many——"

"There ain't better flour in the world than this! Look at it!"

"That cabbage'll keep for years."

"I can show you the cheapest line of salt——"

And so they went on like a gang of howling demons, each man resolved to get the best of his neighbor, and make a sale anyhow.

The kid sat down and roared, while Shanks, surrounded by over a hundred grocery men, all poking samples at him and insisting on his examining them, got more and more confused, madder and madder, and at last, fairly wild.

"Go away!" he yelled. "What th' devil do I want of groceries? Git out!"

His words didn't make the slightest impression on them, and they went right on offering big bargains.

"Clear off! Git! I don't know you, an' don't want-er see you! Somebody's been humbugging you!"

He tried to get away but they wouldn't let him, an he began to strike out and kick.

The row became general in a moment. Everybody hurled and swore, flying samples of flour, cabbage, butter, potatoes and other commodities filled the air, and it took a half a dozen policeman to quell the riot.

"What does all this mean?" asked the panting Shanks of the kid when he saw that sly party.

"Why yer ordered dem yerself, didn't yer?"

"Of course I didn't."

"When yer was buyin' buttons der odder day, didn't you pick up a bundle of 'em an' ask der man if dem was grosses?"

"Yes I did. What of it?"

"Didn't yer say yer wanted 'bout a dozen?"

"Of course."

"Well, dere's over a hundred *grosses*, pick 'em out ter suit yerself."

CHAPTER XIV.

ALTHOUGH business continued first-rate and the show was thronged day and night, Shorty Junior was never satisfied unless he was getting up something new.

His plan was to keep people talking about him and his museum, and continually wondering what the next astonisher would prove to be.

He hit on a novel idea to attract attention.

It was a humbug from the word go; but as the public like nothing better than to be humbugged, provided it is well done and not easily seen through, his venture proved a genuine success.

Everybody was talking about this latest affair, and not only were the daily papers full of it, but even the scientific journals got hold of the matter and discussed it *pro* and *con*.

He got up a flying machine.

"Tell yer what it is, dad," he said when he first thought of the idea, "I thinks I's hit on a racket now dat'll jist git up a big sensation."

"What yer goin' fer dis time?" asked his dad, "Anything in der goat show line?"

"Something different altogether. I's tinkin' of havin' a flyin' machine built."

"Go 'long. Yer crazy. Nex' ting ye'll ber tryin' ter discover perpetual motion or squarin' der circle."

"Der nearest I ever come ter seein' *pupetual* motion was when I was a lookin' at a sick pup goin' fer a lively flea dat boarded wid him. He jist kept dat dog tendin' ter biz from mornin' ter nite. He was a grammatical flea he was intensely so—in fact in two *tense*-ly so."

"How does yer make dat out?"

"Why, present and past. Fust he was *flew*, and whas der dog went fer him he was *fled*."

"When he put out his paws for him, der flea was'n dere, hey?"

"Well, when dogs tries ter put dere paws on fleas, der fleas never *pause* fer a cent."

"Is that *pausable*?" grinned Shorty.

"An's fer squarin' der circle, dad, I knows a circle dat'll square almost anything."

"What's dat, kid?"

"Circul-atin' medium."

"Yer rite dere. What dat won't fix up is generally past mendin'. What ever put der flyin' machine in yer head?"

"Well, yer see it's comin' on *fly* time——"

"Cheese it. Dat's worse dan der flea. Talk sense, can't yer? What yer goin' ter do wid a flyin' machine, anyhow?"

"Why, let her fly, of course."

"Who does yer imagine yer kin git dat'll be fool 'nuff ter try ter fly?"

"Why, I tort I cud git you, dad."

"Mel! Not fi know merself."

"Why not? Ye'd be safe nuff."

"I wouldn't try it on for a tounsan' dollars a minute."

"Yer is ter high priced, dad."

"What made yer ever dream dat I'd go inter dat racket?"

"I kinder tort I cud git yer ter go up on der roof of der buildin' an' give her one bounce, anyhow."

"Nary once."

"I reckon yer cud fly from dis house 'cross der street 'f ye'd jist work dem ears of yours once or twice."

The old man's boot immediately became a flying machine, but the kid was on his guard and dodged out of the way.

"Dat's fine ear yer is got fer flyin'," grinned Shorty Junior, carefully keeping out of reach. "Order hire one of 'em out fer a circus tent."

"I'll hire yer out fi git hold of yer, an' fire yer out ter, yer earrepressible imp!"

"Who's bin ear since I's bin gone? No wonder yer is gettin' bald headed, dad. Dem flippers of yers keeps all der sun off."

"I'll make yer *bawl*, mer son. Let mer ears lone, or I'll waz yer!" cried Shorty, who wasn't nearly as mad as he pretended to be.

"I knows der nex' railroad yer'll travel on."

"Long's it ain't a break necks railroad, I's satisfied. What railroad will it be?"

"Far-er railroad," laughed Shorty Junior.

"Dat's nuff; let's git back ter der flyin' machine."

"Yes; come down ter se-ar-ious biz. Well, I's ordered th' ol' ting ter be built, an' Blunderin' is der man dat's goin' ter fly in it."

"More likely ter fly out of it."

"Not much. He's jist goin' ter soar."

"He'll be sore nuff 'fore he git through wid it."

"Barkis is willin'. Blunderin' wants ter skim der clouds; he hankers ter float; he's fer sail all der time."

"His tings will ber fer sale when he tries dat on."

"Dad, I isn't failed yit on any of mer sensations, an' I doesn't tink I's goin' ter begin now. Look at der talk it'll make."

"An' when Blunderin breaks his blunderin' neck, look at der talk dat'll make."

"Can't help it, dad, I's goin' ter try it on anyhow. If der machine comes down, why Blunderin will go up; and if der machine goes up, why den it'll go down wid der public anyhow; see?"

Shorty shook his head and walked away. He didn't like the idea a bit. So many men had lost their lives in a foolish attempt to fly, that he felt certain that this would only result in adding another to the long list of failures, and cause people to say:

"One more fool gone!"

He was an old enough showman to know that one failure would wipe out a dozen successes, and he resolved to try and persuade the kid to let his last scheme severely alone.

But his hopeful son wouldn't listen to him. He knew what he was about all the time; knew he was right and went straight ahead.

He talked to numerous people about his venture in a mysterious sort of manner, and managed to get several paragraphs in the paper reading something like this:

"If it is true, as is currently reported, that a popular manager of this city thinks he has invented a machine that will fly, it only goes to prove the truth of the old saying, that the fools ain't all dead yet."

Shorty pointed this out to the kid with the remark:

"Look at dat. I tell yer ye'll have der hull town lafin' at yer an' den yer show's gone up der spout."

"Dat's all rite, let 'em laugh. I'll show 'em dat it kin ber done an' don't yer make no mistake 'bout it."

He went right along working at his machine in the most serious and determined way; and from vague hints the papers came out boldly at last and declared with one voice that Shorty Junior must be off his center.

"To think," said one of the leading journals, "that a manager who has hitherto been renowned for his pluck, shrewdness, and thorough knowledge of just what the amusement-loving public needed, should really contemplate such a foolhardy experiment as to try to fly, shows one or two things: Either the man previous to this has only been a lucky adventurer, or else too much success has turned his brain. His friends should keep a sharp eye on him."

The kid grinned when he read this and went on with his work.

Before it was half finished his machine had become famous.

Everybody was talking about it, and a common remark when friends would meet, was:

"Well, how do we fly now?"

Reporters haunted the show morning, noon, and night, all anxious to interview the kid about his wonderful invention.

But all they could get out of him was this:

"Keep cool. Things is humpin' 'long lovely. Dis is goin' ter be my biggest success, an' when it's all ready, I'll send yer word, an' yer kin come an' see me git up an' git rite through der air."

It was all that the newspapers had to talk about at the time, and they devoted column after column to the subject.

The whole history of flying machines was gone over, and detailed accounts of numerous unsuccessful attempts to fly, were printed in full.

The verdict of the public was unanimous.

Any man who would try to fly must be either a fool or a lunatic.

The kid kept his own counsel, and as the machine neared completion he began to advertise extensively:

"Look out for The Flying Machine!"

"Shoo Fly, Don't Bodder Me!"

"Shorty Junior On the Fly!"

"Bound to Go Up or Burst!"

Announcements such as these stared at people from every gutter, fence and brick-pit in and around the city.

Inventors, machinists, staid old chaps who might have been college professors, and men deeply interested in science, called at the show daily and requested to be allowed to look at the kid's wonderful work, but he was firm in his refusals to one and all.

"She's almost done, an' when she's finished and made one trip, den yer kin 'zamin' her ter yer heart's content."

This was his reply to everybody.

When he thought the thing was ripe, and certain that he had the majority of people on the tip-toe of excitement and curiosity, he flooded the town with this announcement:

"Look Out! Look Out!"

"The Problem Solved at Last."

"Now Ready."

"SHORTY JUNIOR'S WONDERFUL FLYING MACHINE."

"Will Positively Start Next Thursday from the Roof of the Great Museum to Central Park and back."

"Come One! Come All!"

At 3 o'clock promptly.

There were mammoth posters in red and blue, and at the top of each was the picture of the machine itself.

This work of art must have taxed the designers' ingenuity, for it resembled nothing that was ever before seen in this or any other world.

It had the desired effect and set folks talking anew.

The kid was sure of one thing: When the attempt was made to navigate the air he would have a mighty host to look at him anyway.

His dad still went about shaking his head and predicting that the rash undertaking would bring ruin and sorrow to all hands concerned, and Shanks declared that in his opinion Chips was a darn fool who had played so many rackets that he had gone stark mad.

Guppy was the only man around the establishment that had any confidence in the venture, and he was chuck full of it.

"He will do it sure," he exclaimed.

"That lad can do anything. He will take charge of that—ah—floppe of his, turn on the steam, and soar off to the blue vault above, like—ah—like an avenging eagle darting at the blazing orb of day. If he flies it will net him a big-profit—a sort of—ah—fly-net. And he ain't the first prophet to fly either. If he fails, by Jupiter I will even slaughter Pete, the learned pig, and eat him up."

At last the eventful Thursday, big with the fate of our hero, arrived, and by twelve o'clock the streets in the vicinity of the museum began to fill up with people; and from that hour on they kept coming.

Every train that arrived brought more and more of them, all bound to have a look at "that little runt and his big air ship."

The huge machine was already on the roof, covered up with a canvas so that no one could see it till the last moment.

Shorty and Shanks made one more effort to dissuade the kid from his foolhardy attempt, but he refused to listen to them.

"I'se a bossin' dis job, dad," he said, "an' I tell yer I'm boun' ter go up 'f it takes a leg. Keep cool an' ye'll find dat I'll come out a bloomin'."

By two o'clock the streets were one mass of struggling humanity, and those who remained at home anxiously watched the sky to see the machine go up.

All travel in the neighborhood was stopped, for when once got into the crowd there was no such thing as getting out.

Everybody seemed to be in a jolly humor, and the policeman's order to "move on" was received with a good natured laugh.

"Fetch out the old skimmer!" was the cry.

"Let her fly!"

"Let's see her soar off!"

"Saw off dat chin!"

And then a whole gang would sing in chorus:

"Now she goes up, up, up; and now she comes down, down, down!"

"Why don't dey hitch er pair of wings on ol' Buster an' send him up?"

"Shorty'll go up higher than er kite dis time!"

"Set down in front!"

"Hats off!"

"Make room for a lady!"

"Fetch out dat fly!"

"Shoo fly! Flewy! Flewy!"

Blunderin appeared about this time to go through his tight-rope performance, and was received with deafening cheers. He crossed, and re-crossed, danced and capered, and was rewarded with a perfect storm of applause.

The country people stared with mouths wide open, holding their breath and expressing their astonishment in faint "good gors!"

"Skip the tral la loo!" yelled a small boy to the lively acrobat.

"Give us the cancan on th' tight rope!"

"He can't, can't!"

"Bring out Parson Guppy, den ye'll have er tight man an' er tight rope both!"

They began to yell lustily for Guppy, but catching the first glimpse of the famous flying-machine they broke out in nine times nine for Shorty Junior, and then settled down for something like quiet, and strained their eyes to see all that was going on.

Within, the museum was comparatively empty. It had been jammed all day, but now everyone had crowded outside to look at the ascension.

Shorty Junior was all excitement, and didn't look as if he expected to make a failure by any means.

Shanks and Shorty were smiling and cheerful, and appeared to have become reconciled to the kid's dangerous venture.

The great flying machine stood on the roof of the show, and about twenty of the hands waited around it. It was shaped like a bird, had a strong iron frame, and was covered with canvas. Two enormous wings, worked by machinery, were depended on to keep it up in the air, and what represented the tail was designed to be used to guide the monster.

It was twenty feet long and about eight high, and when the wings were stretched out it looked like one of that terrible feathered tribe that flourish only in fairy legends.

It was painted in gorgeous colors, and, on the whole, presented quite a handsome appearance.

The hour was near, and the kid called his men together and spoke to them:

"Now, lads, yer has been trainin' at dis fer two weeks, an' know 'zactly what ter der. When I give der word, let every mudder son of yer do his duty."

Stoutlad, who had been selected on account of his loud voice, stepped to the edge of the roof promptly at three o'clock and addressed the waiting multitude.

"Ladies and gentlemen, Signor Blunderin, the celebrated balloonist, will now make his ascension in Mr. Shorty Junior's patent flying machine, the only successful one ever invented."

This announcement was received with cheers, and then the crowd became as hushed as death.

Every man and woman there gazed straight up to the high roof of that building, hoping but dreading.

"Now den, boys," asked the kid, "is yer all ready?"

"All ready," was the answer, "every man at his post."

Signor Blunderin, instead of jumping in the machine as all had expected he would, went to the back of the roof and took from under a cover the stuffed figure of a man that looked enough like himself to be his brother.

Nothing of this could be seen from the street, of course.

He brought this "man" forward and seated him in the machine in the open space near the tail, and then stood back.

"Now, boys," roared Shorty Junior. "One, two, tree, an' up she goes!"

Twenty strong men grasped that machine firmly, ran ahead with it about ten feet, and then threw it with all their might out towards the street.

When it appeared, the vast assemblage gave vent to their pent-up feelings in a loud "ah!" and then again became silent.

The monster with outstretched and feebly-flapping wings hung over the middle of the street for a few moments, suddenly tilted backward, its head going up and tail down, and slowly began to sink.

"Blunderin! Blunderin!" shouted the crowd, in horror.

The man inside it hung on for a second, and then came tumbling out head first, and dashed on the hard pavements beneath.

He was picked up by a dozen show hands, and carried into the building.

When he fell, one startling cry of terror rent the air, and strong men turned pale and sickened, and women, with awe-stricken faces, either fainted dead away or turned tremblingly and fled.

The flying machine, vain-glorious name—was quickly dragged inside the museum, when it came down, and got out of sight.

"Is the man badly hurt, or was he killed?"

This was the universal question, and no one could seem to give a satisfactory answer to it.

A morbid curiosity kept the crowd lingering about. They expected to see the body of Blunderin brought forth, but in this they were disappointed. Even at dusk quite a body of people still hung about the doors of the show discussing the sad catastrophe.

The evening papers, not having time to get up a lengthy report of the affair, contented themselves with making the most they could of it by breaking out in the most startling headlines, set up in the biggest kind of capitals.

DEATH IN THE AIR. Horrible Calamity at Shorty Junior's Museum. Dashed into Eternity.

These were some of the mildest; and as the people read, they exclaimed, "I knew it. I told you so."

If all were awe-stricken outside, in the show was as jolly a crowd as ever met together.

Shorty and Shanks were perfectly jubilant.

The kid hadn't told them the whole thing was a sell till the very last moment, as he took great delight in seeing them fret and stew about nothing.

When he finally did explain to them what he was driving at, their faces lit up with a broad grin, and they were two of the happiest showmen in the country.

Blunderin—the liveliest looking dead man you ever saw—was dancing about and smiling, Guppy—and a bottle—had retired to celebrate the event in private, and Shorty Junior, himself, was roaring with laughter at the grand success of his racket.

"Tell yer what, dad," he cried, "dat was jist der biggest ol' snide dat dis town's had in years."

"Yer did fool everybody bad wid dat flyin' machine, an' dat's fact."

"Dey wasn't fly ter der jok' 'tall. Never tumbled once."

"Dat's so; not a soul of em."

"Why one man in der city tumbled; jist one."

"Who was dat, kid?"

"Der man in der machine."

"He was a tumbler, dat's fact. What affect does yer think dis is goin' ter have on der show?"

"Won't be anybody here ter nite, but after dat, yer can't take in der money fast 'nuff."

"Well, merson, 'i yer kin take in der stamps as fast as yer kin take in der public, ye'll have yer hands full."

If the evening papers had been bad the dailies were worse. They gave full and startling accounts of the attempted flight and heartrending accident, printed imaginary interviews with the kid, published Blunderin's obituary, and editorially frowned on and condemned the whole proceeding, and declared with one voice that such frightful experiments should be prohibited by law.

The next day the real truth of the matter became known, and depression quickly gave way to mirth.

Everybody laughed heartily, poked fun at the papers, said they "knew it all the time," and unanimously declared that Shorty Junior was the boss joker of the town.

All the papers acknowledged the corn handsomely, admitting that they had been badly sold, and one of them contained a talk with the kid in which that racket-living imp declared that he had never intended to fly more than three feet off the ground in his life.

The kid flooded the city with posters informing the public that the great flying machine together with the corpse of the stuffed man were now on exhibition, and just as he had predicted, the show was crowded to overflowing from early morning till night.

The evening of the sell, Shorty Junior, his dad, and Shanks were standing near Guppy's platform, looking at him put Pete through his many tricks.

An amusing incident occurred over which the three jokers laughed long and heartily.

There were only a few people in the house, and most of them from the rural districts.

Guppy was in high feather, and Pete in a good humor and tractable.

"Now, then, ladies and gentleman, began Guppy, as usual, "Pete, the learned pig, is prepared to astound the natives, and compel an admiring world to declare with one mighty howl of triumph that—ah—ah—Pete, be quiet."

"This pig, ladies and gentlemen—and I am sorry to see so few of you here—cannot fly. He is not a—ah—balloonatic. I feel the greatest confidence in stating to you that the only machine that Pete will ever fly in will be a sausage machine."

"They'll grind him all up and stuff him in skin, and when you devour him you'll say it's too thin—Hogg's Ode to Bacon. Now, Pete, are you quite ready, an'?"

The pig grunted, and the performance began. Everybody was amused at Pete's antics, and surprised at his intelligence.

When he began to tell fortunes with the cards and blocks, a burly Dutchman pressed forward and claimed Guppy's attention.

"Does he tol' out vonst everyting mid does cards out vonst?" he asked, staring hard at Pete.

"Everything," answered Guppy. "From the name of the next president down to the first number in the Kentucky Lottery to-morrow morning."

"Is dot so?"

"Will you have the dark curtain jerked up on the dim future? Do you wish to know—to explore, to become familiar with, as it were, th—ah—ah? That'll do, Pete."

"Yaas; go head vonst," answered the Dutchman.

Quite a number of questions had been answered, seemingly to the man's entire satisfaction, when Guppy suddenly inquired of Pete how many children the gentleman had.

The pig knocked about among the blocks for a few moments, and then shoved one to the front bearing the figure 9.

"Ah, nine," said Guppy. "You have nine children."

"Mine Got!" exclaimed a little woman, evidently the man's companion. "Is dot so, Hans?"

"Vat you mean mid dot humbug?" shouted the Dutchman, first looking at the woman, and then excitedly rushing at Guppy.

"Pete says you are blessed with children nine."

"Nine, nine!" roared the Dutchman, shaking his head.

"Certainly, that's what the pig says, nine."

"Nine, nine! Nix!" roared the Dutchman, mad as he could be, while the little woman looked at him in horror.

"Vot, Hans," she cried, "have you really got some children ven you told me you vas a single man?"

"Nine, nine!" bawled the Dutchman, "nine children! Oh mine Got! took me away. He vas deceived me!" And the little woman wrung her hands and prepared to faint.

After the kid had had his laugh out he made everything straight.

"The pig misunderstood der question," he explained to the excited female. "He means dat after yer friend is married he'll have nine children."

Then the little woman smiled, and she and the Dutchman went off arm in arm.

CHAPTER XV.

THE show still continued to be crowded, and nothing in it attracted more attention than the man who did not make the ascension, and the flying machine that wouldn't fly.

People couldn't seem to get through talking about them, and Shorty Junior was reaping an immense harvest.

Strange to say, not one in a thousand would acknowledge that they had been badly taken in and done for.

"I knew the thing was a humbug from the word go, and on that day wisely stayed in the house, and attended to my own business."

This is what everybody said, and if all told the truth, the matter of the streets being jammed on the occurrence of the sell must have been a fleeting dream.

"Tell yer what, dad," grinned the kid, as he puffed his everlasting cigarette in the box office, "won't none of der folks stan' rite up ter der rack an eat hay?"

"No, ner straw nudder," was the answer of Shorty, who had just finished counting over a basket of greenbacks.

"Tain't exstraw-dinary dat dey doesn't, I spect. A feller don't like ter give in dat he's bin fooled."

"Dat's so; 'specially ber a little runt like yer. Why doesn't yer grow up an' ber a big man same's yer farder is?"

"I very promptly gives dat up. Ax mer asoft one."

"Tain't no conundrum."

"Den I'll tryan' answer it. Der reason I don't grow ter be a big man like mer farder is—let me see; cause—cause I's got farder ter go."

"Dat answer would make a dead man groan."

"Oh, now I know. 'Cause I's done groan."

The old man laughed over this bad joke of his hopeful son, while that cheerful and irrepressible individual fired up on another smoker.

"Know der reason we couldn't raise dat balloon?" he asked, after a pause.

"No; why?"

"Cause we didn't have ner powder."

"What'd dat have ter do wid it?"

"Well, I kinder reckon 'f we'd had a keg of powder handy, we could blowed her up."

"Dat would sent her kitin', dat's fact."

"Tink I had der wrong man in her, dad. 'Steard of havin' Blunderin I ought ter had a barber."

"Why ser, mer son?"

"Well, don't yer understan', he'd bin more apt ter razor. See?"

"Dat's a sharp joke fer a shaver like you."

"Don't git in der rays-er der sun, dad, after dat, or der consequences mite be chuck full of grief."

"Carry mer gray hairs in sorer ter der grave, hey, kid?"

"I'd dye first."

"F yer make any more sich bad puns as dat, I'll fire dis book at yer. Yer orter be lathered."

"Let us soap I won't be, anyhow."

"I told yer I would," cried Shorty with a laugh, "an' darn mer 'f don't."

He grasped a big account-book, and sent it whirling at his son's head.

That artful dodger ducked just in time and came up smiling.

"Dat was a very clesse shave, dad," he grinned.

"Like ter cut yer hair dat time, boy."

"I'll never grow a mustache after dat."

"Why not?"

"Cause ye'll allers feel dat yer mus' dash book at it."

"Let's stop splittin' hairs an' come ter bizness. Does yer know yer bank 'count is gettin' mighty hefty?"

"Nobody's 'quainted wid dat fact better dan I is, an' I'll gamble on it."

"Kid, yer is a rich man."

"I know it, dad, every time. But never mind biz ter-day, I want ter git up a little racket."

"What's der row now?"

"Trouble up ter der hotel."

"Shanks?"

"Ner, couple of nex' door neighbors of mine."

"What's der matter wid 'em?"

"Well yer see der walls of mer room is putty thin, an' I kin hear everything dat goes on 'round me."

"Noisy people, eh?"

"Yes. One side of me dere isan' ol' female temperance lecturer, an' she rehearses her little piece every nite jist's I want ter go ter bed."

"Touch not der 'toxicatin' bowl. It bringeth sin an' sorer in its path. Go look at der inmates of our prisons. Look 'pon yon murderer, his han's red wid gore an' his breath reekin' wid Bourbon sour—please pass round der hat, and don't chuck in no buttons."

"Dat's der programme 'zactly. Mus' git rid of dat old gal."

"What's der difficulty wid der udder 'un?"

"Wuss dan der lecturer. On der odder side me I'se got a couple of people married 'bout ten years, an' jealous of each odder yit. Dey is reglar ol' chin-slingers, an' keeps it up till two or tree o'clock in der morning."

"Must be pleasant for yer."

"Got ter give dem der grand bounce sure pop."

"Got anything laid out fer 'em?"

"Nct yit, but I'll drop on a racket 'fore long dat 'll make 'em sick."

When the kid retired that evening, as usual, the circus began.

First he would get a dose of the temperance advocate, and then he would be regaled with the family secrets and the bickerings of the ill-matched couple on the other side.

"'Tis the most loathsome of all loathsome things, a vile habit that once given away to will lead on to death and destruction. Repent! Repent, ere it be too late! Come up, brethering and sistering, and sign the pledge as one man!"

No sooner would the old dame on the one hand get through shouting something like this, than the couple opposite would take up the row.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Peter Pimpleboot, so you ought. Here I am, your poor wife, that tries to do her duty and make you happy, home all day long, while you, you deceitful monster, are off galavanting for all I know with some other woman, whom you love far better than you do me. I'll go home to my ma and my pa."

And then she would begin to cry, while the husband would growl and call her "a darned old fool."

And so between them, the ball was kept in motion till Shorty Junior would get on his ear and make the air turn blue.

"I wish," he muttered, "dat der ol' hen would go home ter her maw an' her paw, an' never git back again. I'll do something wid her 'f I hav ter buy her a lot of tickets ter ride on some cheap steamboat dat'll bust her biler fust trip she makes. An' as fer dat odder crow, I'd like ter see somebody pour whisky down her throat till she couldn't speak for a year."

This latter kind wish gave him an idea.

"Ber jingoes," he cried starting up, "f I doesn't git up a racket an' fill der ol' gal up wid benzeen ter-morrow, you kin shoot me for a short-tail yeller dorg."

Thinking this over, his troubles gradually ceased, and he sank into a profound slumber.

It was late when he arose next morning, and the first thing he thought about was his racket.

And it wasn't to be wondered at, for he had hardly got his eyes open before he heard the total abstinence advocate spouting away as if she had been at it all night.

Besides lecturing she had a pleasant habit of talking aloud to herself.

"The committee from the Juniperbewy branch of the Porkville society will be here to see me at eleven; I think I have my speech all ready. Let me see now—Ladies and gentlemen—fellow laborers in the same noble cause—"

And so she went on the kid's intense disgust.

"Feller laborers, hey?" he muttered; "I'd just like ter belabor der hull kit and boodle of 'em over der head wid a base-ball bat."

As he passed by her room he saw the old dame through the partly open door, bending over her manuscript deeply interested.

As he went down the hall he ran against a new waiter.

A fresh hand just landed and evidently as green as grass.

"Hello, bub," said the kid to him.

"Mornin', sur," answered the man with a bow and scrape.

"Bin in dis hotel long?"

"Me fust day, sur."

"Dis 'll do," thought Shorty Junior to himself. "I'll try a racket on her anyhow, an' see how it works."

"Does yer see dat room over dere?" he asked the waiter, pointing to the open door of the temperance advocate.

"Es, sur," answered the man.

"Well dat's my room. Yer go down stairs an' git mer der stiffest gin cocktail dey kin build, an' bring it up an' leave it on der table in dere."

"All right, sur," was the reply, and off the man bolted.

"F dis doesn't pan out O K," mused the kid, "I'll make dat waiter believe dat he mistook der room; but I reckon der racket will work."

He kept out of sight and awaited developments. Soon the waiter appeared with a good big cocktail.

He walked straight into the temperance woman's apartments and put it on the table; but she was so absorbed in her work that she never noticed him.

"Did yer leave der drinks?" asked the kid, meeting him in the hall.

"I left wan, sur," he exclaimed.

"I tol' yer two; git more."

Again the waiter dove below to execute his order.

"Didn't fetch her dat time," mused Shorty Junior. "Guess she's putty tuff ol' root."

Once more the waiter appeared with two cocktails.

"What made yer get two?" asked Chips stopping him.

"Sure, yer said yer ordered two, sur."

"Well, but dis makes tree."

"Yes, sur," answered the man, looking as blank as a wall and as stupid as a fish-ball.

"All rite; go 'head an' leave 'em in the same place," said the kid with a grin.

The waiter marched in and left the liquor beside the other. This time he stopped, to let his fair customer know that she was served.

"There's yer cocktails, mum," he briefly announced.

The woman glanced up in surprise. She was a hearty-looking female of about forty, and wore corkscrew curls and gold specks.

"My what?" she asked, sharply.

"Yer cocktails, mum."

He stood up straight as a ramrod, evidently expecting to receive a "tip."

"What on earth is a cocktail?" exclaimed the woman, gazing at him savagely. "What is it? What is it, sir?"

"Gin, mum. Best in the house."

He thought he was conferring a favor on her, and began to wonder when he would be the head waiter in the hotel, and have a show to make sly quarters out of every old lady in the place.

There was one brief moment of silence, and then that temperance girl arose in her might.

"G-in!" she shrieked. "Bring me gin! How dare you, sir!"

She looked like an overcharged cloud, and the man at once dismissed from his mind all thoughts of ever becoming anything at all, and began to shake in his shoes.

"I order gin!" she roared, bouncing up, and working her arms lively. "I, who have been preaching against it all my life! You are trying to insult me, you puppy. I'll show you! I'll give you gin!"

That was all the notice given.

The storm burst. And in one minute that green waiter was rapidly changing to a black-and-blue waiter.

He was knocked down and hammered, howled at, and sat on, before he knew what he was about.

He finally managed to break away, and ran down the hallway, closely pursued by the female fury.

She followed him clear into the street, and then stood in the doorway and jawed for ten minutes.

"Golly!" laughed the kid who had been watching the whole proceedings. "She's reglar ol' buster! Wonder f I can't keep der stone rollin'?"

He walked into the woman's room and saw sitting on a side board a pint bottle labled "for the nerves."

"Dis'll do I guess," he exclaimed, and taking the bottle to the bar-room, he emptied out its contents and had it filled with brandy and gum.

"Reckon she'll want a big horn of dis when she gits back," he grinned, placing the bottle where he had originally found it, "cause her nerves will be all unstrung, I bet."

As he was coming out he met a stout Irish servant, girl, who had been in the house a long time.

The kid knew she was found of a drop, and indeed she looked as if she had been indulging at that very time.

"What's all th' row down here Mr. Shorty?" she asked.

"Why," said the kid who was bent on having all the fun he could, "der woman dat has dis room ordered tree gin cocktails, an' den wouldn't drink 'em. Said der liquor was ner good."

"Sure der's not er sup of bad liquor in th' place, th' ould hathan!"

"Dere dey is," exclaimed Chips, pointing them out. "Shame ter have 'em chucked away, aint it?"

"Say nothin', Mr. Shorty, darlin'; be gum, I'll dbrink 'em meself."

And so she did.

She had finished two of them, and was beginning on the third when the temperance woman came pouncing in, mad and panting.

When she saw what the servant girl was doing she got wilder yet.

How dare you drink on my premises, you hussy!" she yelled at the top of her voice.

"Hussy yerself, yer ould blackguard!" bawled the girl, on whom the liquor had already taken affect.

"Didn't I allers know yer drunk on th' sly?"

This was enough.

They went at it hammer and tongs immediately, and the air was filled with dirty stockings and flying hair.

They were soon separated by a crowd of waiters.

The girl went off "hurooing!" and the temperance fanatic retired with a black eye and a nose all knocked one-sided.

"Dis is just red hot!" howled the kid, who had been dancing around on the outskirts and roaring with laughter. "Isn't had so much fun in a month. Dis is reg'lar circus."

He still watched the woman through the door.

"Oh, my!" she groaned. "I have fought the good

fight in the blessed cause but my poor nerves are all unstrung. I think I'll try some of that medicine the doctor gave me."

She swallowed a wine glass full of it, and straightway a heavenly smile overspread her stern features.

"Elegant!" she murmured. "Sublime!"

She took another dose and still another.

The woman had never probably drank that much liquor before in her life, and its effect on her was marvelous.

From being angry and excited she became calm and good humored, and began to sing snatches of songs.

She went for one more dose of the kid's exhilarating concoction, and then she was a goner.

She got dizzy and uproarious, and began to dance a wild cancan around the room.

While in the act of doing this the committee from the Juniperberry branch entered her apartments—five lean ladies and two bilious clergymen.

They looked upon their sister with surprise and horror.

"What's th' matter with yer?" yelled the inebriated dame of temperance. "Nerve bitters! Hurroo!"

Then she grabbed one of the ministers and began to waltz him about, much to his disgust.

"Sister Ann is drunk!" exclaimed one of the women. Sister Ann didn't let that foul statement pass by quietly for a cent.

She seized a green gingham umbrella and sailed into that crowd like mad; and such a hubbub as they kicked up generally, brought to the spot the landlord and the police.

Sister Ann, her baggage and the committee were promptly fired out of the hotel, and the kid never saw them more.

"I's got rid of dat nuisance anyhow," grinned our hero, who had been enjoying himself greatly while watching the proceedings.

"An' now I mus' go fer der odder."

Fortune favors the brave, and a certain unnameable person never deserts his own.

When Shorty Junior left for the show this same morning, his mind was industriously at work thinking up a racket to bounce his jealous neighbors.

He hadn't gone far before he was stopped by a fairly-dressed woman carrying a little child in her arms.

She seemed excited and acted strangely.

"Oh, sir," she cried to the kid, "I feel so faint and giddy. Won't you hold my child for a moment?"

Shorty Junior wasn't that kind of a rooster at all.

"Dis isn't mer mornin' fer holdin' children," he grinned, with a wink. "Fraid I mite have ter hol' it ter long."

He was about passing on when his eye suddenly lit on no less a personage than the very one he was thinking of—the growling man who occupied the room next his own.

"Hol' on, sis," he said, stopping the woman. "I know yer little game fust-rate, an' I'll help yer ter git rid of dat baby. Ser dat man over dere?"

"The little short one looking in at the window?"

"Dat's him. Isn't got a chick of his own, an' if yer want's yer cub took good care of, leave it wid him. Put it rite in his arms. Dat's der way ter fetch him."

The woman thanked him with a smile, and walked over to her victim.

What she said the kid could not hear, but what she did he could plainly see.

She spoke to the short man a few moments, thrust the young one in his arms and disappeared as if by magic.

And that gentleman of abbreviated stature stood there holding the child away from him, and looking foolish, rightened and bewildered.

"Just what I 'spected der ol' gal would do," laughed the kid. "Dis is first rate ser fer; wonder what der ol' duffer 'll do wid it?"

The old "duffer" evidently didn't know what to do with it. He looked perfectly willing to throw it in the street, or dump it in an ash barrel, but feared if he indulged in any such little eccentricities, that he might be collared and arrested.

While he was looking up the street and down the street in the most forlorn and helpless manner, who should come sailing around the corner but his wife.

She saw him in a moment and suddenly stopped, as if frozen to the spot.

She stared at her husband and the child in blank astonishment, and could hardly believe the evidence of her own eyes.

The very thing she had been accusing her husband of doing for the last dozen years—and never really believed a dozen seconds—had happened.

There he stood holding a child—evidently his child.

The short man looked at her and began to tremble, while he attempted to explain.

"My dear, appearances are against me, but—"

She cut him dead short.

"Peter Pimpleboot," she cried, when she at length found her voice—that horrid voice that the kid had been compelled to listen to so many nights—"don't dear me! How dare you, you brute? Oh, you vile wretch! This is the way you go on, is it? Where is the mother of that brat?"

Peter made a frantic effort to talk to his wife, but as he did so the young one set up an appalling yell, and drowned his voice.

By this time a crowd had collected, and everybody began talking at once.

"Give der woman her baby."

"Stop stickin' pins in it, to make it cry."

"Go for a bottle of soothing syrup."

And then Mrs. Pimpleboot, overcome by anger and shame, began to cry herself.

"Farewell, Peter Pimpleboot," she howled, "you have blighted my young life,"—she was forty at least—"and I shall go to my pa and to my ma. Leave me, gay deceiver, and never let me see you more!"

This, and the bawling baby together, troubled the

gay deceiver—who was about as gay, just then, as a rusty lightning-rod—so much so that, when his tearful wife sprang into a coach and was driven off, he followed on behind as fast as he could leg it.

And the kid never saw them again either.

The gay deceiver returned to the hotel the same afternoon, packed his trunk and left for parts unknown.

"Well," mused Shorty Junior, as he went on his way rejoicing, "I reckon after dis I'll sleep putty quiet."

CHAPTER XVI.

"DAD," said Shorty Junior, the other afternoon as he sat lazily reducing a cigarette to ashes, "Yer slung out a remark ter me todder day."

"I's liable ter do dat at any moment, kid," answered Shorty, rolling back in an easy chair, "what 'ticular remark is yer calling mer 'tention ter?"

"Yer said dat I is got ter be a rich man."

"Well, I reckon dat statement was bound up in der wrapper of fact an' tied round wid der ribbon of truth, wasn't it?"

"Yer is jist 's rich as a regulator every time. I kin give yer der change of a shillin' wid der best of 'em."

"Kid, yer mus' ber high up 'mong der thousands."

"Dad, mer future's got a greenback linin' ter it, an' dat yer kin gamble on rite 'long."

"Dem's der kind of greens I likes ter gambol on merself every time. Guess yer kin ante up putty heavy."

"Tommy kin make room fer his ante all der while. I holds a 'flush' hand; 'bout a hundred thousand of a kind."

"I tort dem was 'bout der figgers."

"Dad, I's tinkin' of retirin' from der show biz altogether."

"What!" exclaimed Shorty, setting bolt upright and staring at his hopeful son in blank surprise. "Tire from der show?"

"Dat's der programme. Skip out, jump it, shake her clean, propel, sell out—understan'?"

"Why yer mus' be crazy! Yer is chuckin' way der biggest racket yer ever had in yer life; but den yer allus was an odd feller, kid."

"Well, 'fi is an odd feller I'd better go fine der Injuns an' open a lodge."

"Is yer puttin' up a job on me? Givin' me taffy, or what?"

"Nary a bounce dis time, dad; I's in dead sober earnest."

Shorty looked his boy straight in the face for some time, and then made up his mind that the kid meant every word he was saying.

"Darn me, 'fi kin understan' it," he cried at length. "Here yer is wid der dollars bowlin' in every day, an' yer is seriously talkin', but chuckin' everyting over yer shoulder. Kid, yer mad!"

"Well, yer won't be mad when I 'splains it all ter yer. Let's call in Shanks, he's interested ter."

The Yankee was sent for, and came in, wondering what was wanting, and took a chair.

"What's the row now?" he asked.

"Fire up on nudder cigar dad," said Shorty Junior. "Shanks burn a weed. We is got some hefty bizness ter wrastle wid an' we mite 's well git through wid it here an' now."

The kid's face was beaming with a kindly look, and he never appeared to better advantage.

"What's up? Some racket you want us to give you a hand with?" inquired Shanks.

"It's a racket dat ye'll both tumble in love wid, I's certain, an' 'f yer doesn't, yer is no longer friends of mine."

"Spit her out, mer son," exclaimed Shorty, who was getting excited.

"Dad, 'f yer expectorate as a first-class gemmen, yer musn't spit tings out."

"Never mind slingin' jokes; give us facts."

"I'll give 'em ter yer facts, I can. Shanks, I was jist tellin' der ol' man dat I's tinkin' of jumpin' out of der show bizness."

"Why, Chips, you must be clean gone in the head," exclaimed the astonished Yankee. "What's come over you, anyhow?"

"It takes a putty tuff man ter come over me, yer bet," observed the kid, who was still smiling, and looking as genial as a summer sun. "I isn't goin' ter 'tire altogether, yer must understan', but I's goin' ter take in a partner."

"What in der world, mer son, does yer want wid a partner?" cried Shorty, in surprise. "Ye'll git in some outside galoot dat'll rake in half der stamps, an' won't benefit der show a bit. Yer brains must got full of sand."

"Don't be too sandguine of dat," grinned Chips. "Yer see, dad, one partner is nuffin. I's tinkin' of histin' in two of 'em."

Both Shanks and Shorty held up their hands in horror at the bare thought of such an unheard-of thing, and they both seriously began to entertain the idea that the comical kid was wandering in his mind.

"Who is dry?" finally asked Shorty, in an angry tone.

"Well," slowly replied the kid, cocking his legs up in an easy chair, "one of 'em is a short kind of a rooster, radder smart an' fond of fun. I's takin' him in 'cause he's a kind of distant relative of mine."

"Who the deuce is that?" snapped Shorty.

"Oh jista relative ber marriage. He's my father!"

"Kid, does yer mean dis?" cried Shorty, bouncing up, while his face at once became wreathed in smiles.

"Is I der one yer is goin' to scoop in for a pard?"

"Well, yer is one of 'em, dad," answered the kid.

"Well, mer boy, tell mer quick, who is der todder?"

"Well, todder feller is a queer sort of cove dat doesn't know much anyhow—a tall, long Shankhae kinder rooster."

"Yer means Shanks," broke in Shorty, dancing about for joy.

"Dat's his name, sure pop!"

Shanks feelings almost overcame him as he listened to this happy announcement, and at first he could hardly speak. He shook Chips heartily by the hand and mumbled his thanks.

In his excitement he put the lighted end of his cigar in his mouth, which made him swear a good round Yankee oath. This brought him to himself, and then the three old time comrades sat down, and over a bottle of wine soon settled the business.

It was agreed that each one should have a third. Shorty was to be the manager, Shanks the financial man, and the kid, a silent partner who was to come and go and do as he liked.

"I's got dollars nuff ter shake trade," explained Shorty Junior, "an' is goin' in ter live on mer money an' have a high ol' time generally. But I'll drop inter der show once in a while, yer bet."

"Ye'll ber 'bout der noisiest silent partner in der country I 'spects," laughed his dad.

The papers were drawn up and signed, and the new firm was to go in operation on the first of the coming month; until which time the kid retained command.

A few days after the above interview, Shorty Junior ran across a very queer kind of cow.

She was extraordinary large, had a coat as long and curly as a Newfoundland dog's, and only owned one eye. He bought her on sight.

"I'll make a first-class curiosity out of dat animle," he exclaimed, "an' make her pay for herself ten times over."

He had a large glass eye made to supply the missing optic, and it could be put in or taken out at pleasure.

This eye was partially filled with water, in which disported a pretty leech.

When she was fixed to the kid's satisfaction, he got out a big poster in front of the show reading as follows:

THE GREATEST CURIOSITY OF THE AGE.

NEVER BEFORE SEEN.

Astounding! Unnatural! Appalling!

THE SACRED COW OF BUDAHGRAHA,

With a Living Snake in Her Eye.

Hundreds of people stopped to read this notice, and soon they began to flock in, to see the kid's newest arrival.

They were somewhat divided in their opinions. A few skeptics put it down as a sell, but the majority took great stock in the sacred cow, and were ready to swear she was the genuine article, straight from Budahgraha.

The fame of the cow with a living and moving snake in her eye, traveled abroad, and one day a professor, from an out of town college, called at the show to examine the animal critically.

He brought several powerful magnifying glasses with him, and meant business.

"Der jig's up," grinned Shorty Junior, when he saw the old chap, "an' next week der Sacred Cow of Budahgraha will be cut up in tuff steaks, an' sellin' for ten cents a pound."

The professor walked up to the cow and looked at her.

"Good," he exclaimed, with a pleased smile, "she is a curiosity."

Then he took a long look at the snake.

"It moves!" he shouted, in an ecstasy of delight.

"Course it does," observed Shorty Junior, who stood at his side.

"I will examine this thoroughly," he said. "Boy"—turning to the kid—"hand me a glass."

"Cert," answered Chips, who promptly handed him a broken tumbler.

The old boy looked at the kid in astonishment.

"I cannot see a snake through a glass like this," he exclaimed.

"Bin good many 'snakes' seen trough dat glass, boss," laughed Shorty Junior.

"I want a magnifying glass," he continued, not seeing the joke.

He had brought several with him in a little case that was placed behind him on the floor.

He turned and stooped down and began to fumble with the box to get it open.

As he did so, the kid, who had been trying to think up some way to get the learned party out before he could give him and his cow dead away, noticed one of the show hands standing behind his curly curiosity.

He made a motion to him, which was readily understood, and then he gave that sacred cow a lively blow in her good eye with his fist.

The animal quickly jumped back and lowered her head threateningly.

As she did so, the man behind gave her tail a sharp twist, and she suddenly bolted forward.

Seeing the professor squatting right in front of her, she made a dive at him, and catching her horns just under his coat tails, she raised him and sent him flying through the air.

His hat went one way, his glasses another, and he himself landed, the most astounded scientist living, plumb up against a cage of monkeys, every one of which, began delivering him a hurried lecture, and extracting samples of his hair and clothing.

Without saying a word, he grabbed his little box, gave one mournful look at the sacred cow of Budahgraha, and got out of that show house like lightning.

"Well," grinned the kid, patting the bovine on the shoulder, "guess yer is good fer a couple of weeks yit at least. Bet dat ol' fessor will be so scared of cove after dis dat he won't even drink milk."

Shanks and Shorty had a jolly laugh over the kid's account of his little racket, and both wished they had been on hand to take in the fun.

"I reckon dat's der highest up der ol' man ever got in animated nature in his life," exclaimed Shorty Junior, "only der way, dad, talkin' 'bout gettin' high

up, before I gives up der command of dis shop I's goin' ter fly high up meself—goin' ter 'stonish der natives."

"What yer got on der brain now?" inquired Shorty.

"Pantomime is played out, minstrels is ner good, an' show pieces is gone up der spout. I's goin' rite back ter der legitimate."

"Jack Sheppard on horseback, or something like dat?"

"Nary fer a cent. Brace yerself ol' man, 'cause I'll startle yer—Hamlet."

"Ger long! Who is yer got kin play Hamlet?"

"I's got der cast all made out an' will slap her on nex' week. Buster is der galoot what'll play der melancholy Dane."

"Who ever heard of a Hamlet weighin' seven or eight hundred pounds?"

"Dat's der weight my Hamlet's goin' ter pan out. Der fat woman is ter be der Ophelia. Stoutlad goes on fer der ghost, an' I's thinkin' of playin' fust grave-digger meself."

"Well go it, mer son. Yer is der boss, an' if dat don't draw big houses nuffin' in dis world will."

While Shorty Junior was preparing his new play, he got up a little racket that took in half of the people in the city.

He hung a big banner out in front of his place which read as follows:

Wonders Will Never Cease!

Nature Outdoes Herself.

The Greatest Monstrosity of The Age

Living and Breathing.

A perfect Revolution.

No Humbug.

A Horse With His Head Where His Tail Should Be!

Smaller bills informed mankind that this celebrated horse was captured by the Indians on the plains of Dakota after a chase lasting over three weeks.

It also explains that this horse had been thoroughly broken and trained, and was now gentle, kind and tractable, and could be seen for the small sum of twenty-five cents.

The "celebrated curiosity" simply amounted to this:

Shorty Junior had had a stall built, the same as can be found in any stable. Into this he had backed his horse Buster, who stood with his tail in the manger and his head towards the rear of the stall.

As the bills claimed, he was a horse with his head where his tail should be.

And the kid had more fun out of this simple arrangement than he had had before for some time.

The moment a visitor would enter and take one look he would see that he was badly sold.

Instead of going away mad he would straightway go forth, and by his glowing description induce half a dozen of his friends to go and be sold as cheap as he had been himself.

This half dozen would send still more, so that there was a string of people coming and going all day long.

It was as bad as the Tom Collin sell, and as the kid had no free list, a much more profitable one.

A long countryman walked in one day, and inquired for the celebrated horse.

The animal was pointed out by one of the show hands, and the countryman stood still and looked at him for ten minutes.

Then he scratched his head, and simply muttered, "Well, by Jove!"

He crossed over and examined the sacred cow, and the living snake.

"Golly," said he, with a puzzled look. "That is curious now, aint it?"

He began talking to one of the men, "Is it alive?" he asked innocently.

"What th' snake?"

"No th' cow."

"Course it's alive. How could it move if it wasn't?"

"Well, I didn't know but what she might be worked by machinery. Was she born that way?"

"Bin that way since she was a calf."

"Does she seem to enjoy it?"

"Course she does. She's frisky as a kitten."

"What do you feed th' snake on?"

"Feeds him on Tuesdays an' Fridays," was the solemn answers.

"I 'specs he mostly lives on eye-water, hey? About how many snakes can she be relied to give on in say a quart of milk, now?"

The man tumbled. He saw that the countryman was quietly coddling him, and that he wasn't as green as he looked to be by any manner of means.

He walked away, and left the countryman by himself.

"Well, by gum," muttered our rural friend; "putty good sell, that hoss business, darn if it ain't. This cow racket ain't bad, nuther. Seems to me I ought to have a little fun for my quarter, too, an' I guess I will."

He quietly slipped out the glass eye from the head of the sacred cow, and put it in his pocket.

Then he walked behind the animal and getting hold of a piece of rope, tied her tail fast to the back of her box.

"That's somethin' towards it I reckon," he said, looking as sad and serious as a funeral parade. "Now I'll go over an' take another look at that hoss."

"Born that way?" he inquired of Buster's keeper.

"Jist 'zactly as yer see him."

"Must been a bustin big colt. I can understand how he could brush the flies off himself with his head, but how th' duce does he eat oats with his tail?"

"What yer givin' me? Can't yer see der hull thing's a sell?"

"Is it a cell? I thought it was a horse. He looks a good deal like a horse, now don't he? If you hadn't

told me he was a cell do you know I'd gone away hug-ging th' fond delusion to my heart that he was really and truly a horse. Just what is th' most striking difference between a hoss an' a cell, anyhow? You see I so seldom see a cell.

"Dat'll do, mister," cried the man. "I ain't no company for you. I'll call fer de little boss, he'll fix you in no time."

He sent down for Shorty Junior, while the countryman walked off with just the ghost of a smile on his lips.

When the kid came up, the first thing he noticed was the wild, not to say disgraceful look, of the sacred cow of Budahgraha.

"Who's bin foolin' wid dis sacred cow?" he roared.

"Does she come apart easy?" asked the mild countryman.

"Somebody'll come apart easy round here," exclaimed the kid, who was on his ear.

"You ought to buy her a pair of spec's," suggested country, moving away.

He got behind the cow and gave her a prod with a long pin.

She made a bolt forward, knocking Shorty Junior heels over head, but her tail being tied fast, she at once came flying back.

Then she ran backwards and forwards, and began to bellow and howl and kick and dance.

The kid got to his feet as quickly as possible, and scrambled out of the way.

"What der debbil's der matter wid dat d—d sacred cow anyhow?" he yelled.

"I reckon those show people ain't goin' to have all the fun to themselves, by a long chalk," grinned the countryman. "This is a good enough circus for me."

The infuriated cow gave one last tug, and, taking half the skin off her tail, she broke loose.

People scattered in every direction, and, in a few moments, she had the whole show to herself.

She got up near old Buster, the horse with his head where his tail should have been, and she made a dive at him.

It was the biggest job she had ever tackled in her life.

The old horse came rearing out of his stall, and he went for that sacred cow with his awful hind feet, and when he got through with her, she was carted off to the offal dock.

While Buster and the cow were having it hot and heavy, kicking up a terrible din and breaking things right and left, while everybody was shouting, howling and advising all at once, the mild and innocent countryman stepped up to the kid, and, handing him the glass eye with a living snake within, he remarked:

"I reckon yer can build up another cow around the eye."

He glode out, leaving the kid wild.

CHAPTER XVII.

It was the last week of Shorty Junior's management.

And the whole town was talking about Hamlet.

To see Buster, the fat man, do the melancholy Dane, everybody swore would be worth half a lifetime, and the performance bid fair to be the grandest attraction that the kid had yet offered.

He had got the play up in good shape, but spite of hard study, not a man in the cast was perfect in his part.

Buster, himself, was the worst of all. He had got a dozen different Shakesperian plays all mixed up, and he was just as apt to quote from Macbeth as from the tragedy announced on the bills.

He was firmly persuaded that he could act—that he was a Forrest, Booth, and Davenport, all rolled into one.

"What's size got do with it?" he gasped to Guppy.

"My art, art, sir, makes 'em forget—I'm fat man."

"My expansive friend," replied Guppy, with the old wave of his hand, "I can readily imagine that you will be—ah—immense. Yours will be a broad characterization, and a deep. You will so carry away your audience, as I may put it, that they will forget whether you are Hamlet or—ah—a prize ox. I predict, sir, that you will be—ah—received with much applause, and, eh, many rotten eggs."

"You're jealous," wheezed Buster, as red as a turkey cock. "Jealous! you want—play part yourself. I'll show you a Hamlet."

"Hamlet!" sneered Guppy, who delighted to cod the fat man. "Take any shape but that. Come as the rugged Russian bear—a nose by any other name would smell the same. Call it not Hamlet. Rather call it—ah—Hamfat."

Buster flounced away at this to con over his part anew, while Guppy wandered off upstairs to teach Pete a new trick—and take a drink.

"Well, dad," laughed Shorty Junior, who was sitting in an easy chair in the box office, "what yer tink of der legitimet now?"

"It's good nuff fer me mer son; seats all sol' ahed fer tree days ruddy. Der'll ber 'standing' room only' 'for der doors is opened."

"Doesn't think der people is goin' ter pay a dollar a piece ter stan' up, does yer, dad?"

"Course dey will."

"Den I guess I'll go over an' hire der Washington Square."

"What duce yer want wid dat?"

"Well, long's we take dere money, might's well give 'em a comfortable place ter stan' in."

"Dat's good idea," grinned Shorty; "go hire it."

"No; 'f der's goin' ter be sich an awful rush, I won't hire dat, nudder. I'll go higher up. I'll take der Central Park."

"Central Park! Not a cent'll yer take in dere, mer son."

"Well, dad, I spic' all der money yer kin git in dat park yer kin put in yer watch parket."

"Better put it in yer vest pocket, 'cause den what money yer git'll ber well invested."

"Dat puts mer in mind of dat feller dat wanted mer ter produce his original American drama in ten acts. I handed it back ter him an' 'vised him ter carry it 'round in his pistol pocket."

"What fer?"

"Only way he could ever get it off."

"Oughten ter discourage native talent dat way, kid."

"I didn't discourage him a bit. I jist fired him rite out. Ten acts is more'n I kin ten' ter. I tol' him he'd committed ten of der worst acts I ever know'd a man ter ber guilty of."

"I see. He couldn't grind any axe here."

"I tol' him der nex' time he felt like gettin' up a play not ter hatchet."

"Dat settles it. Let's cut der conversation, chop dis chin, an' tak' a hack at bizness."

"Saw away, dad, what wood yer say?"

"When yer goin' ter play in dis piece yerself?"

"On der las' nite of it. I's going ter give Buster an' Stoutland, Guppy, der giant, an' one or two more a benefit dat evenin', an' yer bet der'll ber more fun dar yer kin shake a stick at."

"All rite, kid, yer is der boss, go it."

"Up ter dat time I is; and den I quits. Dat's mer las' night, yer know, dad."

"Dat's so, kid; an' den Shanks an' I takes der tiller."

"Tiller dat yer love her," sang Shorty Junior, preparing to dance away. "Dad, yer is had 'sperience nuff in der show line, an' 'f yer doesn't make a success of it, it's yer own fault. So yer kin tak' der tiller an' steer der ol' ship over der biller, an' 'f yer bill her good yer'll take in a cargo of dollars. Yer is a mast-er of yer trade, ser keep 'long riggin' der people, and yer'll never have der sheriff tack-in up a bill of sail on der front door."

Saying this he skipped out to look after the people who were rehearsing on the stage.

After watching them and directing their movements for some time, he strolled down towards the main entrance.

One of the hands came up to him and said:

"Mr. Shorty, there is er couple of gentlemen that wants to see you. They are just outside by the box office."

"Who is dey?" asked the kid.

"Dunno, they insist on seein' th' boss."

"All rite," answered Chip, "I'll go out an' interview 'em."

He found a couple of men outside, and when they saw him they rushed up and shook him by the hand in a most hearty manner.

"Mr. Shorty, Junior, I believe," exclaimed the eldest of the two, who was a tall, thin, nervous individual.

"Kerrect, every time," answered the kid, with a nod.

"Ah! Allow me to introduce my friend, Captain Bumboozle, the great African explorer."

Wondering what the deuce was coming next, the kid shook the friend by the hand.

Captain Bumboozle was a short, stout, rather youngish man, who wore a bald head and eye-glasses.

"I understand," began the captain, "that you have on exhibition here, numerous savages from the wilds of Africa, cannibals from Hichicujiji?"

"Yer ji-ji-jist bet I has," stammered Shorty Junior, with a grin. "What of it? Does either of y' 'spect to find yer long lost brudder in the gang?"

"I am a great traveler," explained the captain. "I have searched for the source of the Nile—"

"Did yer find it?" interrupted the kid, looking deeply interested.

"I did," was the answer.

"What kinder sauce was it? Anyting like Worcester-shire?"

The two strangers stared at the questioner for a few moments, and then the eldest continued:

"My friend, the captain, has roamed through many lands, and speaks numerous languages."

"Does he speak 'em all in English?" asked Chips, innocently.

"Ahem! Among other tongues he is thoroughly conversant with the Hichicujjian, and, seeing that you have some of the natives of that comparatively unknown island in your show, he would like to visit them and have a conversation with them."

"What?" quickly asked the kid. "In Hichicujjian lingo?"

"Exactly," was the reply. "He speaks it as if he was born there."

"Mebby he was," hinted Chips.

"Oh, no, sir. A native of this country."

"Well, how did he git dere 'f he wasn't borne dere?"

The strangers did not reply to this conundrum, but stood waiting to be passed in.

The kid was in a quandary. He didn't care just then to have any stranger visit his cannibals and savages, as at the moment they were at their midday lunch, and were industriously engaged eating sandwiches, drinking beer and telling high old Irish stories.

He thought for a few moments, and then taking the two men one side, he said:

"Gen'men, I can't take yer in ter-day 'cause der cannibals ain't on exhibition. Yer see, dis is a kind of holiday wid 'em—anniversary of der declaration of independence, or birthday of der father of dere country or someting like dat, an' I can't 'sturb 'em. Come tomorrow mornin' an' yer shill see 'em in all dere glory."

This seemed to satisfy the strangers and they promised to call next day.

"Golly," said the kid to his dad after he had told him of the expected visit, "doesn't know what ter do wid dem fellers. 'F dey is snides I doesn't want 'em

in, an' 'f dey is der real Simon pure African 'splorers, dey'll drop on der cannibals in a minute an' give 'em dead away."

"What yer goin' ter der 'bout it?"

"Dunno; give 'em some kind of a racket, yer bet."

It wasn't till just before the strangers put in an appearance that Shorty Junior hit on a plan to balk their curiosity.

He posted his cannibals and Indians on what he wished them to do, and ordered them not to speak a word of English under pain of a punched head.

When his visitors arrived he pretended to be overjoyed to see them and led the way right up stairs.

"Der Hichicujjians is feelin' bully dis mornin'," said the kid, "an' dey will talk ter yer like sixty, I'll bet a cow."

"I say, Bill," whispered the elderly man to the supposed captain, "we are in for a dish of fun, now, sure."

"Keep cool, old man," was the answer, "an' we'll have a jolly time here before we get out."

Shorty Junior overheard this conversation quite plainly.

"Snides, ber Jove!" he muttered to himself. "Yer will have a jolly time 'for yer git out of dis, mer boys, an' 'f doesn't make yer sick 'for I is trough wid yer, I'll eat eighteen hard biled eggs fer supper dis nite 'for retires'."

When they got up stairs they found the Hichicujjians in one end of the room and the wild Indians in the other.

The cannibals surrounded our party at once, and began to chatter a crazy sort of gibberish that would have driven a saint wild.

The captain spluttered back at them in a jargon fully as heathenish as their own for a while, and then turned to the kid with a look of disgust.

Here is where the jolly joker thought he was going to get in his fine work. He intended to cod the kid unmercifully and scare him out of his boots.

He had got hold of the wrong party. It wasn't the kid's week for scaring.

The captain began by declaring that the cannibals were not cannibals at all. They were frauds of the first water and didn't know a single word of the Hichicujjian tongue. How dared Shorty Junior impose on a confiding public in this outrageous manner?

They began to ask questions:

How long had the kid known these cannibals? Did he know their parents intimately? What Sunday school did they attend and could they send money home to their folks?

The kid cut their racket short before they got fairly started.

"Hol' on, gemmen," he whispered, "dese chaps understands a little English, an' 'f dey overhear yer dey won't like it."

As the kid said this the cannibals quickly formed a ring around the party and began to sing a warlike song and to dance a wild, fantastic sort of fandango.

"What is the meaning of this?" asked the captain, looking about him anxiously.

"Dunno," replied the kid, "'spect it's one of der customs of der country. Never see 'em kick up dis way fore in mer life."

The dance of the savages became wilder and wilder, and their faces grew ugly and scowling.

The Indians in the upper end of the room were by no means quiet spectators of these proceedings. They brandished their clubs, uttered fierce war whoops, and seemed to be preparing for a conflict.

And the two strangers grew more nervous and fidgety every moment.

It wasn't panning out near as funny as they thought it would.

Suddenly a little short man came dashing through the cannibals, and whispered something in Shorty Junior's ear.

"Yer doesn't say so?" cried the kid, looking thoroughly astonished. "Why, what's der matter? Speak rite out."

"Well, you see," explained the man, who was very much excited, "the Indians and the cannibals has been at daggers point a long time, and now the thing has come to a head. I've lost control of them and a bloody battle is liable to take place here at any moment. For God's sake, gentlemen, fly at once and save yourselves!"

The captain and his friend looked decidedly sick. They turned pale and trembled, and wanted to get away badly.

Before they could move, however, the row began. The Indians charged down on the cannibals with a terrific yell, and in a moment the bloody work began.

And the joking captain and his pal were punched with spears, pounded with clubs, and shot with arrows till they were nearly dead with pain and fright.

The kid managed to get them out of the room when he had had his laugh out, and the two travelers, with their clothes in ribbons, their faces bloody and heads swelled, dashed down the stairs and disappeared up the street.

"Well, mer festive savages," said the kid to the cannibals and Indians who gathered about him, grinning and panting, after they had gone, "yer done dat first-rate—ser good dat I'll send yer up a couple rounds of extra drinks."

The wild men of Africa gave him a good old Irish cheer, and he went down and ordered the liquor.

Hamlet proved one of the successes of the season.

The house was crowded to its utmost capacity every night, and hundreds went away without being able to get in the show at all.

The play was the funniest that ever was seen; the mere effort to be serious on the part of the kid's queer company, was enough to have set a graveyard full of dead men laughing.

The audience was allowed to have pretty much its own way, and they chafed the actors unmercifully.

They themselves rather enjoyed it—all save one. Hamlet himself.

Buster had got so puffed up with the idea that he could play the part, that he put the howlers and scoffers down as a lot of idiots, and cursed them by the hour.

Shorty Junior did not appear until the last night.

For several days the bills had announced, "A joint benefit to Buster, Guppy and company, on which occasion Mr. Shorty, Junior, Shakspearian howler, will make his first and only appearance as The First Grave Digger."

If the house had been packed before what shall be said of it on this night. Every available inch was taken up, and seats commanded extravagant prices.

The audience was a jolly one, and was made up largely of lawyers, artists and newspaper men. They came for a good time, and had it.

When Hamlet was first discovered the applause was deafening, and fairly made the building tremble.

Over seven hundred pounds of solid fat waddling around in black tights, and trying to look tragic, was too much for any ordinary mortal to gaze at with a straight face.

"Hello, Ham, ole boy!" yelled a gallery god, as if he had known the melancholy Dane all his life. "How is yer to-night?"

This set the ball in motion, and the audience kept it going until the end of the play.

"Go in trainin' fer a lamppost!" bawled someone.

"Rub yourself down with sand-paper!" suggested another.

"Shut up, an' let him chin his mudder!"

"Why don't yer git yer ulster blocked, Hamlet, while yer wait for fifty cents?"

Amidst shouts and calls of all kinds, the play went on until the ghost appeared, and then there was another howl.

Guppy was the ghost, and he looked like an animated cobweb, looking for a fly. For what lines of Shakespeare he couldn't remember he promptly supplied some of his own.

"Hello, Guppy!"

"How's Pete, der pig?"

"Yer is a bully ole ghost. Yer smell so of departed spirits!"

Hamlet was on one knee listening to his father's ghost go through with his little troubles.

Suddenly the ghost made a shy at him, which was such unexpected business that Hamlet tumbled over backwards.

Then the remarkably jolly spirit winked, grinned, and walked off.

Buster was so fat that he couldn't get up alone to save his life. And the audience knew it. They laughed, roared and yelled.

"Jump right up like a little man!"

"Go fer dat ghost an' knock der stuffin' outer him!"

"Does yer often take a tumble?"

"Blow him up wid powder!"

"Hitch a balloon to him!"

"Histe him wid a jackscrew!"

The curtain was lowered, Buster was helped to his feet, and did nothing but growl, and call the people in front "fools," till he had to go on again.

Ophelia was a charmer and a favorite. She weighed something over four hundred, was rather good-looking in the face, and knew nothing of her part whatever.

She was universally known as "Whoa, Emma!"

While she and Buster were together the house was in a perfect uproar.

"Go fer her, Buster!" was the advice of all.

"Set up close to her an' tell her fairy tales!"

"Tell her about when yer was a thin young man!"

"Kiss her fer her mudder."

"Oh, Buster! Don't you do it!"

When Hamlet told his deceived Ophelia to "go to a nunnery," nobody would have it that way.

"Go to a bummery!" shouted a seedy man.

"Go to a ginnery!"

"Go to grass!"

"Go put salt on yourself!"

"Go an' git thin!"

"Go crazy!"

The players' scene, where Hamlet reclines at his Ophelia's feet, was always a most trying one to the weighty Buster.

He couldn't recline worth a cent.

Knowing that if he once got down he would have to lie there, he simply used to crouch on one knee.

He replied to the queen's invitation to sit beside her.

"No, good mother, here's metal more attractive," and took his position in front of Ophelia.

"Don't yer metal wid dat young lady, Buster," advised some one.

"Oh, Ophelia! I'll tell yer ma!"

"Hamfat, ol' man, send out fer a quart of beer an' treat the court."

Amid a series of calls and interruptions the players' tragedy was finally finished.

The poison had been poured into the sleeping king's ear, while the laughing audience yelled:

"Run it through a funnel!"

"Squirt it in with a hose!"

"Give Hamlet a couple of barrels of it!"

The King of Denmark had staggered to his feet, called for a "light," and made his exit.

Then Buster began his speech:

"Why, let the stricken deer go weep,

The hind ungalled play—"

and attempted to get up.

It was an utter and miserable failure.

Shorty Junior, who had secretly been poking as much fun at the Dane as anyone else, had, not entirely

unaided by the fair Ophelia herself, succeeded in tying a stout twine to Buster, and when that very bad actor tried to arise, he gave the cord a sudden and hearty pull.

Result: Hamlet rolled over on his back, and sprawled out on the stage with his heels in the air.

At this, everybody howled themselves hoarse.

"Hamlet, dey's got yer on a string!"

"Git up!"

"Git out!"

"Git er derrick!"

The prompter kept throwing him his cue.

"Why, let the stricken deer go weep," and finally Buster, mad as a mule, sat up and faced the audience.

"Let the stricken deer go weep and be d—d! If I had the wretch here that did that, I'd kill him!"

Round after round of applause followed this warlike speech, and the tumult became so great, that there was only one thing to do, and that was to ring down the curtain.

When the kid himself made his appearance as the grave digger, he was greeted with cheer after cheer.

He played the quaint part first-class, and for a wonder, the audience kept quiet and listened to him.

When Buster came on and began to fool with Yorick's skull they broke out again worse than ever.

"Bile it fer a soup bone!"

"Jump in a rowboat, and skull out!"

"It looks jist like Stoutlad, der livin' skeleton!"

"Lay bones, Hamlet, der cops is comin'!"

In an evil moment Buster got too near the grave, and a plank giving way, he tumbled into it.

And then another shout went up.

"Bury him, Shorty!"

"Berry good!"

"Dat's er grave joke!"

Buster, who, fortunately, was not hurt, raved, fumed, swore, and tried to get out; and to add to the general merriment, the kid gravely proceeded to cover him with dirt.

And once more the curtain had to descend to stop the uproar.

In the last act, where the queen drinks from the poisoned cup, the kid had put up a racket on his fat Hamlet.

Buster, contrary to all rule, used to always drink from the goblet himself, as at this stage of the performance he was very dry.

Now, as usual, he seized the cup, and panting like a dog, he raised it to his lips.

He gave a puff in it, and quickly threw it from him.

The kid had filled it with pulverized charcoal, and Hamlet was as black as Othello.

This ended the play, as the tumult became so lively that nothing that was said by the actors could be heard.

The audience, roaring with laughter, was finally got out of the building, and Shorty Junior's active management of his great show came to a brilliant end.

The benefit money was equally divided up then and there, and when Buster rescued his share he speedily forgot his woes, and became as jolly as the rest.

Having followed the fortunes of the kid, Shorty and Shanks, thus far, we leave them only to again meet the jolly trio in—

SHORTY AND THE COUNT;

OR,

The Two Great Unmashed.

[THE END.]